# BING

SPRING
1997

No. 115

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

# THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Hon Secretary & Treasurer** | MICHAEL CRAMPTON | 19 Carrholm Crescent<br>Chapel Allerton<br>Leeds LS7 2NL<br>Tel: 0113 2689556 |
| **Magazine Editor** | MALCOLM MACFARLANE | 1 Hulme Hall Avenue<br>Cheadle Hulme<br>Cheadle<br>Cheshire SK8 6LN |
| **U.S. Representative** | F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS | 5608 North 34th Street<br>Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA<br>Tel:. (703) 241-5608 |
| **Australian Representative** | DAVID CURRINGTON | 1 Ivy Street<br>Greenacre, NSW<br>Australia 2190 |
| **Mainland Europe Representative** | ETTY GITS | Hoboken Straat 559<br>4826 EJ Breda<br>Holland<br>Tel: 076 - 5719 804 |
| **CD's/Records** | JIM REILLY | 27 Beaulieu Road<br>North End<br>Portsmouth<br>Hants PO2 ODN<br>Tel: 01705 666677 |
| **Films** | KEITH PARKINSON | "Meadowcroft"<br>Houghtons Lane<br>Eccleston<br>St. Helens WA10 5LD<br>Tel: 01744 22248 |
| **Radio & TV**<br>(Current Developments) | BERT BISHOP | Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue,<br>Maylandsea, Chelmsford,<br>Essex CM3 6AJ<br>Tel: 01621 742144 |
| **Radio & TV**<br>(Research) | LIONEL PAIRPOINT | 86 Ellesmere Avenue<br>Mill Hill<br>London NW7 3HD<br>Tel: 0181 959 3394 |
| **Photographs Editor/ Archivist** | RON BOSLEY | 10 Fountains Avenue<br>Simonstone, Burnley<br>Lancashire BB12 7PY<br>Tel: 01282 779924 |

# CONTENTS

Page Nos.

Editorial..... 4
Secretary / Treasurer's Report..... 5
Letter From Leslie..... 7
Thanks, Ken..... 8
'Humanette' ??..... 10
Bing In The USA..... 11
Bing on the Internet (3)..... 13
Paradise..... 16
Another Season : It Might As Well Be Bing..... 16
Weekend at the Waldorf..... 17
Trading Post..... 18
Celluloid Crosby..... 19
The A - Z of Bing's Movies..... 21
Once In A While..... 24
Books 'n' Bing..... 25
One Sweet Letter From You..... 26
Bing and the Andrews Sisters..... 31
Lionel's Lines - "That Certain Party"..... 34
Bert Bishop's Bing On the Box..... 37
Keeping Track..... 42
From Big Bands to TV ..... 48
What the Papers Say ..... 51

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 1997 are:-

| | |
|---|---|
| UK | £8 per annum |
| Mainland Europe, including Eire | £9 per annum |
| USA and Canada | US $20 per annum |
| Australia and New Zealand | A$30 per annum |
| South America | £11.50 per annum |

All remittances should be sent in **£sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in **£sterling**. For addresses see inside front cover.

**Articles** for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
**Other Correspondence** concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material ©Copyright ICC 1997.

# EDITORIAL

There was a good response to the questions I posed in the last BING. I asked whether members were happy to debate the relative merits of Bing's various activities rather than blindly accepting that everything Bing did was perfect. The consensus view was that sincere debate is healthy and indeed essential if the Club is to continue to prosper. Obviously it is mature and reasoned views we want rather than emotional criticism and it will be up to me as Editor to ensure that I deliver what is required. We are all Bing admirers to a greater or lesser extent and we must remember this when debating points.

Regarding the name 'International Crosby Circle', most members who responded did not want any changes and indeed several stressed how important it was to maintain the 'International' part of our title. In truth, we did not have any plans for a name change but arising from the odd comment made over the years, we felt that it would be worthwhile canvassing members' opinions. A selection of some of the letters we received on the topics raised will be found in the 'One Sweet Letter' section.

I am very sorry to have to announce the passing of Don Haizelden who did so much for the Club in a quiet way. Several of us visited Don's home just before Christmas and a short article describing this event will be found further on in this edition. Our cover photograph was provided by Don and we publish it as a tribute to him and as a tangible reminder of the many rare photographs he provided for the pages of BING to supplement those supplied by Ron Bosley. Incidentally, you will notice that Ron Bosley is now also described as 'Archivist' on our inside cover. For many years, Ron has maintained extensive scrapbooks of press cuttings and photographs of Bing and I frequently dip into these. Will any of you who have newspaper and magazine cuttings of Bing which you do not need, please consider sending them to Ron. Alternatively, if you have something rare which you wish to retain, could you send a photocopy to Ron? As the official ICC archivist, Ron is building a very important reference source which will be invaluable as the years go by.

We are honoured to have two major articles from Ken Barnes and these make fascinating reading. Frans van der Kolff sends us another update on the Internet and we shall have to ensure that we are well represented on this in the future if we want the Club to continue to expand. Incidentally, there was a delay in supplying the final volume of Fred Reynolds' 'The Crosby Collection' but it should have been received by those who ordered it by the time you are reading this. A review will appear in BING 116.

Peter Cakanic raised a query with me recently when he said:

*"Searching for a depository for our Bing collections is a dilemma many of us will be facing in the not too distant future. Does any institution want 78s? LPs perhaps! If in mint condition. CDs and Videos? Probably. Maybe inquiries to University and library music departments might be a good place to start."*

Peter is right and whilst I know that Gonzaga are keen to have Crosby items and memorabilia, they cannot cope with vast numbers of 78s and LPs. I should welcome members' thoughts on this issue.

Many members continue to be active in promoting Bing and special mention must be made of Leslie Gaylor, Stan White, Ernest Sutkowski and Maggie Ryan for their prodigious efforts in getting Bing's records played on radio. Paul Barnes, Frank Wappat, Ron Field and Arne Fogel amongst others have their own regular radio shows which regularly feature Bing and also several members take part in local radio programmes themselves. Even I was interviewed on GMR Radio some time ago and also in February I gave a talk to the British American Association in Bolton. This was well attended and produced another member for us. Our thanks to all of you who advance Bing's cause in so many different ways.

I mentioned in the last BING that in future our editions will be titled 'SPRING', 'SUMMER' and 'WINTER'. This is our first issue so named and the next magazine should hopefully reach you in late August before Summer fades away. I shall be aiming to submit the material for the Summer edition to the printer on June 25th so will all intending contributors please bear this date in mind.

**Malcolm Macfarlane**

# SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

1996 was another successful year in the history of our club and it is my pleasant duty to commend the ICC team for their industry and enthusiasm in bringing BING to an admiring and appreciative readership. Support for our goals is evident when you consider the generous donations and letters of encouragement which members have contributed during the past year. We are confident that 1997 will see further successes as we and the recording / media industry face the twentieth year since Bing's untimely demise.

The ICC plans to publish Bing's chronology and a membership listing this year and if these projects are self financing and meet with members' approval, then we will continue to publish like publications over the next few years.

## NEW MEMBERS

### Australia

David Currington, our much travelled representative, was recently in London on vacation and I was privileged to meet up with David and spend a day in his enjoyable company. We discussed Crosby matters at length and explored the capital's record shops where David's knowledge of these locations was a marvel to behold. There were some items of Crosbyana which we had not seen before but many CD's were overpriced in our view. Interestingly, we did find a shop which was selling Bing LP's at reasonable prices including a copy of 'High Tor' for £10.

We welcome:-Peter Maczi (Queensland), Warren Sargent (South Australia), Tom Jackson (New South Wales).

## United Kingdom

Mike Astbury (Stoke), Jim Baxendale (Lancs), Mr R Coreless (Lancs), Terry Charlton (York), J W Fairman (Essex), Harry Kirman (Surrey), Derek Meaden (Kent), C I Pattinson (Staffs), Andrew Ferry (Essex), Tony Puxley (Bucks), G T Rose (Bristol), J Salisbury (Cambs.), Derek Sanders (Surrey), Larry Shannon (Lancs), Alistair Sherlow (Edinburgh), Richard Selwood (Somerset), Bill Stapleton (Lancs)

## Republic Of Ireland

Our recent advert in the journal 'Perfectly Frank' brought three new enthusiastic members knocking at our door and we have had much correspondence with them since. Derek Perkins and Chris Hitchcock are members of the Dublin Sinatra Society and they are actively recruiting on our behalf. We extend our thanks to them for their prodigious work.

Dick Gillespie, Chris Hitchcock, Derek Perkins (all of Dublin), Gwen Gulley (Waterford), Timoney Martin (Co. Kildare).

### North America

It is a privilege and a pleasure to welcome no less than 60 new members from the United States and Canada. Wig and Laura are true ambassadors for the ICC and we are lucky indeed to have their services. Thank you both for your untiring work on our behalf.

We welcome:- Dune Amold (Mich.), William Berdan (NJ), Ron Canatella (LA.), Charles Carrol (FLA), Anthony Castellano (NY), Robert Chandler (FLA), Joseph Clay (VA), Peter Costulas (Conn.), Charles Degges (VA), William Elliot (FLA), Raymond Evans (Calif), Ted Farenzena (Calif), David Foe (Mich.) Raymond Flatow (NY), Patrick Galluzzo (Oreg.), Rev Dorthea Graham (Calif.), Richard Grudens (NY), Clarence Haege (Ill.), Frank Heiderer (Calif), Albert Hensley (Ill.), Geraldine Hewson (Calif.), Samual Ingham (Calif.), Judy Jeffers (Calif), Dennis Kane (FLA.), Colin Kidd (NJ), Walter Kieltyka (Mass.), Donald Lamb (Mo), Steve Lasker (Calif.), Charles Lemieux (Ill.), Steven Lewis (Kans.), Margaret Lowther (NY), Harold Maruca (Pa.), George Mccabe (Ill), Edward Montapert (NY), Dolores Onorato (NJ), Eddie Page (FLA), James Raley (Md), Cynthia Ross (Md), Raymond Sasala (Ohio), John Sebert (Ill), Mozelle Seger (Calif.), Fred Sevekow (Calif.), James Sheehan (Conn.), Allen Silversyein (NJ), Robert Stagnaro (Calif), Ewald Stechholz (Conn.), Glenn Taranto (Calif.), Dean Thompsonn (Sc), William Thompson (Calif), James Tingle (Calif), Helen Tolton (Calif), Albert Trott (Mass.), Charles Van Ripper (NJ), Bemice Wachnicki (Conn.), Gilbert Yingst (Calif), Roger York (VA),- Robert Zipkin (Calif), Kelly Campbell (Quebec), Scott Payne (Ontario), Britton Smith (Ontario).

## DONATIONS

Members continue to be generous with their donations and for this issue of BING we list a record number of donations. Thanks to all for your extra support and especially to the person who made an anonymous gift on behalf of one of our much liked deceased members.

Thanks go to;

Roger Addey, Oisin Andrew, Maurice Beardmore, John Bignell, Don Bostock, A C Bowerman, Yvonne Bowles, Les Brice, R J Burchell, Don Butler, John Cable, Dave Campkin, J P Carpenter, Ron Chaplin, Alex Conn, Matthew Conroy, John Coomes, A Curran, May & Jim Davenport, Bill Emery, Larry Farrell, Arthur Fisher, Brian Ford, R E Gould, L S Grassby, Joan Griffiths, Douglas Haywood, George O'Reilly, Goronwy Owen, Ken Heason, S W Hellens, Doug Hellier, Paul Hennessey, Mrs E E Hey, Jack Hobday, Ron Holder, Thomas Hughes, Roy Irvine, Frank Kelly, B Lane, Robert Larkin, Sylvia Lawrence, Brian Lewis, Dr C D Linton, Don Love, John Manston, John Marshall, Ron McCormick, Raymond McCormack, John Mcvicar, Leslie Mills, Peter Monaghan, Thomas Mooney, Nicholas Morrison, Alf Mutter, David

Newbold, Margaret North, Wally Oldfield, Lionel Pairpoint, George Patmore, Alf Peyton, Amold Pope, G L Robinson, Jim Roche, H C Ross, R J Russell, Tom Shaw, Alastair Sherlow, Arthur Smith, Dave Spong, Matthew Sprott, John Stiles, Eric Swithenbank, John Tasker, A J Vaughn, Trevor Wagstaff, Bill Wesley, Tom White.

# DEATHS

It is my sad duty to report the deaths of four of our members.

Mr H W Kirman (Grimsby), Thomas Berryman (London), John Stonehouse (Lincoln) and Don Haizelden (Long Sutton).

Don Haizelden was a special kind of guy who helped so many Crosby enthusiasts achieve their goals. He was respected amongst world famous collectors and he built up one of the premier collections of Bing and Crosbyana in the world. Malcolm recounts the visit of himself, myself and Ron Bosley to Don and Peter's home and we will long cherish the memory of our day amongst a wonderland of Crosbyana. The ICC sent flowers for Don's funeral and we extend our condolences to Peter.

John Stonehouse MBE made several trips to the annual Leeds meeting and his widow Nancie has told us that John appreciated being a member ofthe ICC.

Our condolences to all family members.

# 1997 BING CROSBY CALENDAR

This year's calendar has been exceptionally well received and it will always remain a tribute to Don Haizelden who provided the artwork for this successful issue. 12 copies remain at the time of writing and the cost is £5 each. Next year's calendar will be issued in memory of Don's untiring contribution to Crosbyana

# SUBSCRIPTIONS 1997

May I thank all those members who responded promptly to my appeal that they pay their subscription on time. The response was fine but 75 members' fees are still outstanding as I write in February, We do appreciate all members' support and do hope that reminder letters will not have to be sent out. Please pay now if you have not sent your dues.

# BING CROSBY IN THE 30'S

Copies of this fascinating book are still available from your secretary or Wig in North America and if any member ordered and has not received their copy will they please contact me.

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

The ICC will publish a directory of members during 1997. If any member does not wish to be included then would you please write to your secretary without delay. Copies will only be made available to members and to no other sources whatsoever. The last listing of members was in 1958!

So that my friends is my round up for Spring 1997 and I do hope that we will have much to celebrate in this, the twentieth year since Bing died. Until summer, aloha!

**Michael Crampton**

---

**INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE**
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 1996**

| **Income** | **£** | **Expenditure** | **£** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subscriptions and donations | 4298 | BING (printing) | 3700 |
| US payments for books and postage | 2383 | BING (postage) | 1518 |
| Sales - 'Bing in the 30s' | 525 | US Books & postage | 2383 |
| Sales - Songography | 175 | Secretarial expenses inc exceptional postage | 957 |
| Sales - Jonzo CDs | 180 | Purchase - Jonzo CDs | 300 |
| Back Issues | 108 | CD Book | 500 |
| Sales at Leeds event | 50 | AGM | 225 |
| Sales for I. Ashurst | 31 | Publicity | 120 |
| Sales - E. Griffiths collection | 20 | Items from Eric Griffiths collection | 240 |
| Interest 1996 | 82 | Entry fee - Leeds event | 50 |
| | | Payment to I. Ashurst | 31 |
| | | Editorial expenses | 38 |
| | | E. Griffiths tribute | 35 |
| Balance 31/12/95 | 8814 | Balance 31/12/96 | 6569 |
| | 16666 | | 16666 |

Note: Expenditure on printing and postage in respect of BING 111 appears in the 1996 accounts, having been brought forward from 1995. Exceptional items shown under Secretarial expenses relate to items sent to USA, Australia and Europe such as back issues, calendars, CDs etc. It should be noted that these accounts are a simple Income and Expenditure summary and that they do not take account of amounts owing by or to the Club nor are items held as stock shown. The Club is in a sound financial position and able to cover its likely expenditure in 1997.

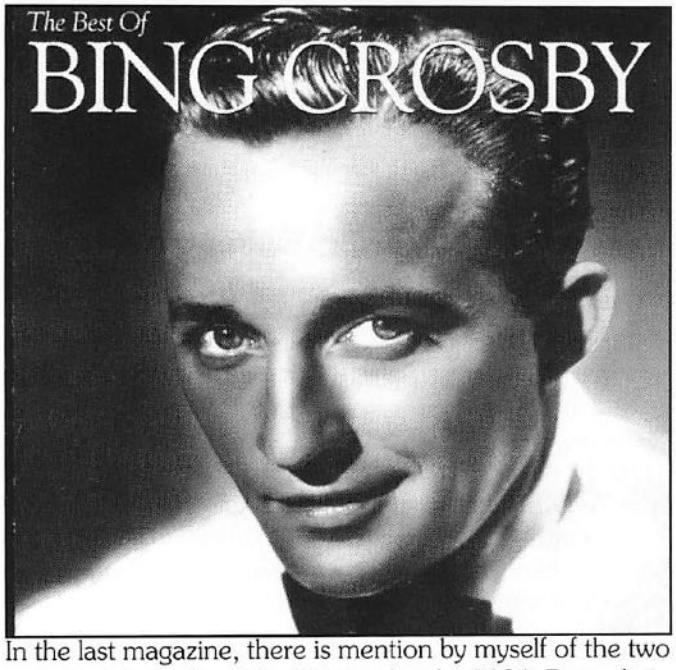
**Michael Crampton - Secretary / Treasurer**

# LETTER FROM LESLIE

I would like to thank everyone concerned for their involvement in the production of the December edition of BING magazine. It made fine reading for me, several times over, as I discovered during the festive period. The photograph that adorned the front page I only too readily confess is not one of those that are among my favourite photographs of Bing as pictures of him handling guns are not appreciated by myself.

Firstly, may I offer my utmost thanks to the many members who sent me their vast array of Christmas cards which I appreciated very much indeed. I do like to reciprocate as much as possible, but it is inevitable that not everyone could be catered for. Many cards are simply signed with a Christian name only and I cannot always recognise the sender.

I found the reading of the last magazine most interesting indeed and Malcolm Macfarlane clearly revealed that his trip to the USA last June was a most fruitful one for him and his wife. It is obvious that Malcolm had learned a lot and he certainly won his medals for the enthusiasm that took him 'across the pond' to acquire further knowledge of Bing. It must have been an experience for Malcolm to have met Stephanie Edwards, the Special Collections Librarian at Gonzaga University and to have enjoyed the kind attention shown by the now late Don Eagle. Yes, Malcolm, I was very pleased to have shared with you your reminiscences, so many thanks indeed.




In the last magazine, there is mention by myself of the two compact disc release last November by MCA Records in London and entitled 'The Best of Bing'. I described how Steve Tallamy, the Strategic Marketing Director for MCA in London, had contacted me about the proposed CD set and that I had to work to Steve's criteria that the material selected must be all of Bing's famous and best known recordings. I asked a number of Bing followers to write in with their suggestions for 50 tracks to be used on the CDs and in turn Jim Reilly and I compiled a final master list which was sent to Steve Tallamy. Among the rarer titles desired were 'Why Can't You Behave', 'The Girl With The Pigtails in Her Hair', 'When the White Azaleas Start Blooming', 'I've Got To Fall in Love Again', 'Moonlight on a White Picket Fence' and a long time personal favourite of my own, 'Sentimental Music'. Whilst we were unsuccessful with some of these, we succeeded with the last two mentioned and one evening when my telephone rang, the voice of ace 'Bing booster' Stan White was at the other end. "Listen to this, Leslie," was Stan's instruction and as he held his telephone to the radio set, I heard Bing singing 'Sentimental Music' and it was being featured there and then by member Paul Barnes who keeps Bing's flag flying over the air waves to quite some degree. A wonderful moment!

The double CD went into the album charts and reached number 59 thanks to steady advertising on TV, especially on Channel 4 during the day. In fact the TV advert could almost become a collectable item because we have not often seen Bing promoted in this way. There were two versions of the advert and the longer one ran for 30 seconds and featured the voice of David Jacobs saying:

> *"The Best of Bing Crosby. 50 fabulous songs on one album. A unique musical history from one of the world's best loved entertainers. The Best of Bing Crosby - the perfect Christmas gift. It's in the shops now."*

Bing was heard singing snatches from 'Swinging on a Star', 'Gone Fishin', 'Anything You Can Do', 'Moonlight Becomes You' and of course 'White Christmas'. Film clips from many films were seen and it was amazing how much could be fitted into 30 seconds. A shortened version of the advert was also used and this ran for 20 seconds. Several shops, including HMV, featured the set in their advertising and all in all MCA must have been very pleased with the sales they achieved. My own thoughts were that the CD's success could have been improved had its price not been so high.

Changing the subject somewhat, like all other members, I only too well realise that BING magazine is in existence for all members' interests and varying opinions. All of these have to be respected including members' points of view on Bing's recordings and these have certainly been the subject of some comment of late. Some years ago when talking to Bing about his recordings, he said "Do you know Leslie, it doesn't matter what I record there's always somebody who doesn't like this or that, you just have to go along and hope for the best." So in his wisdom, the 'ol master had matters weighed up ideally.

Over the Christmas period, I was delighted to have seen a programme on BBC1 television of short excerpts from the famed 'Parkinson' shows and how good it was to see Bing singing 'Hello Parky' to the tune of 'Hello Dolly' from his 1975 appearance. A little later in the show we were treated to the duet of Bing and Michael Parkinson singing 'The Pleasure of Your Company' from the same show. I have told the story on many occasions of how I had corresponded with Bing about the possibility of him appearing on the 'Parkinson' show and then how I contacted the show's producers Richard Drewett and

John Fisher. Incredibly everything came together and Bing duly appeared with Parkinson in 1972 and then later in 1975. I still get great satisfaction from remembering those events and it was very nice to see those extracts from the shows over Christmas.

Cheers to everyone.

**Leslie Gaylor**

*(Editor: Thanks, Les and how good it was to see Bing back in the charts again! Incidentally, I acknowledge Leslie's comments about the cover picture in the last edition. Ron Bosley and I wanted a wintry scene to fit in with the season and we particularly liked the photo used because it was different and caught Bing in an interesting pose. The rifle worried us too, not only because of the Christmas scene, but also because of the publicity surrounding the Dunblane tragedy. However hunting was an important part of Bing's life and taking all factors into account, we decided to go ahead with the photo.)*

ON SONG: Crosby was a Christmas cracker

**My heart went Bing**

**MY BEST Christmas present came a few years back when a record company manager accepted my request to issue a compact disc of Bing Crosby's lesser-known Christmas recordings.**

**He came up trumps with his delightful Christmas package entitled *Christmas With Bing*.**

***Leslie Gaylor, Newport, Isle of Wight***

# THANKS, KEN

**Our man in Australia, David Currington, sends his appreciation to a very special contributor to the Crosby legend.**

How fortunate we collectors are that Ken Barnes came into Bing's life. Come to think of it, how fortunate it was for Bing! Thanks Ken for providing Bing with the platform from which to jump enthusiastically back into the music scene during his golden twilight years.

The idea and prospect of a CD package release of the United Artists tracks as a tribute to the 20th. anniversary of Bing's death is very exciting. I, for one, have written to United Artists (EMI) to promote and support your project. I wish you every success with it.

If I have your ear, Ken, I wonder if you are in a position to and would mind publishing an account of your recording sessions with Bing in an issue of this magazine? I know you have given an overview in your much enjoyed book 'The Crosby Years' but a more personal and intimate glimpse behind the scenes would be fascinating study for me and I'm sure for the members as a whole. For me, I am particularly intrigued by the difference between the United Artists and Polydor sound. For years I felt that Bing's voice was weaker on 'Seasons' than, say, on the 'Beautiful Memories' album. Considering the traumas of 1977 and the fact that Bing apparently had a cold for the Palladium concert later in the month, it is still quite possible that Bing was in lesser form for 'Seasons'. The other prospect is in a difference in recording techniques.

Through the generosity of a very good friend, I have in recent times had the opportunity to review Bing's LPs on super-duper sound equipment. To my ears, this reveals 'Seasons' as what I can only best describe as a 'soft' recording. It is to my ears the same effect that 'soft' photography has on the eyes. Instead of the tremendous clarity of the United Artists albums, the Polydor LP has Bing's voice somewhat diffused. Was this to disguise the voice or just to confuse me?

Your educated and studied views would be much appreciated, Ken.

As a footnote to this open letter to Ken, may I say that the half dozen albums with which Ken was involved spotlight Bing in tremendous form and I commend any member who bought these albums for the sake of collecting to give them a good listen. You'll wonder why you've passed them by for so long.

**David Currington**

**We passed the open letter on to Ken Barnes and back came his response.**

## Dear David,

I can't thank you enough for your generous comments about my contribution to the Crosby discography. The pleasure really was all mine. As a record producer with over 100 albums to my credit, I can say without any hesitation that working with the inimitable Bing was the highspot of my career as well as being one of the happiest periods of my life.

Someone recently pointed out that, apart from Jack Kapp, I was the producer who turned out the largest body of work with Bing. At first, this seemed like an extravagant statement but when I looked at the six albums we made together and then the 73 augmented songs with the Buddy Cole group, I realised it could be true. And if it is, then my good friend Pete Moore must be - after John Scott Trotter - the most prolific of Bing's arranger/conductors.

You asked me to recount my recording sessions with Bing. All of them were pleasurable and some were more memorable than others. I do recall vividly our first sessions in London in 1975. It is my normal practice to choose the songs with the artist and to be involved in routining and key-setting. But, due to administrative pressures, I left some of this to Bing and Pete Moore. Two days before the first session, Pete showed me his arrangement of "I Love To Dance." I noticed it was scored in the key of E-flat and immediately remarked that I thought it was too high. Pete was surprised "That's the key we rehearsed it in," he said.

"How did he sound ? " I asked. "Fine," replied Pete. "He made all the notes clear as a bell. No problem at all."

I still thought it was wrong so I asked Pete to have all the parts re-copied in D-flat. Pete seemed concerned. "He's going to notice the difference." I suggested Pete bring both versions to the studio. The first one we placed on the stands was the re-copied D-flat version. Bing nodded approvingly and proceeded to sing along with it. Singer and orchestra were note-perfect. So, with a satisfactory balance, I called for a take. We switched on the red light, Pete gave the orchestra the downbeat and off we went. About eight bars in, Bing held up his hand and shouted "Hold it." The orchestra stopped and Pete looked at the control room and shot a worried glance at me.

Bing made a note on his part with a pencil and then said "OK. Let's make it." He did two takes and the voice sounded perfect. The reason Bing had stopped the take was to amend the second chorus lyric by adding his own words in pencil as follows:-

*"Tell the leader man we don't need a plan. Just give us a one and a two."*

It took exactly 14 minutes from the time we put the score up on the stand to the end of the second take. And we never used the E-flat version.

*Bing and Pete Moore tackle a problem together*

On the day before the largest orchestral session, Bing and I were talking with the engineer, John Timperley, who explained to us how he intended to lay out the orchestra. "I'll put the brass over there. The reeds over here and the strings on the other side of that screen. The rhythm will be against that wall with the drums screened off and you, Mr. Crosby, will be in that glass vocal booth."
Bing shook his head. " Oh, no, " he said calmly." If you're gonna do that, I might just as well have stayed in California and sung to a track."
John seemed worried. " But, Mr. Crosby, " he pleaded. "The brass can get very loud and..."
"Then I'll get louder. " Bing cut in. But, seeing the look of concern on John's face, he added. "Look, John. I'm an old band singer. This is the way we used to do it in the old days. Just put me near the rhythm section where I can see Pete. If it doesn't work out - why then, I'll go in the booth. OK ? "
"OK." John was relieved at the suggested compromise but was still uncertain over Bing's ability to project over the brass.

The next day, Bing was as good as his word. Not only did he sing louder, he proved that he had a much bigger voice than we expected. His voice cut through the brass with clarity and gusto and he was pitch perfect all the way. John Timperley was amazed. He had worked with everyone from Harry Secombe to Shirley Bassey.
"The only other singer to do that ," said John. " Was Tony Bennett. I even had to put Tom Jones in the booth."

Bing came into the control room to hear the playback of "I Got Rhythm." He listened through it and then without saying a word, looked at John who said "We won't need the vocal booth, Mr. Crosby." Bing nodded and looked at me.
"What else have we got, Ken?"
" Heat Wave, " I replied.
"Let's make some heat - with Cuban Pete" he said and went back to the studio floor to discuss tempo with Pete. This was an even bigger, more densely-textured arrangement with Kenton-like overtones and lots of activity in the percussion. Again Bing came through perfectly. It wasn't that he was belting at the top of his range where his voice was at its thinnest - but he was projecting with incredible volume throughout his middle-range where his voice was at its strongest and most resonant. All this took place with him standing in the centre of a 43-piece orchestra. It was truly exciting.

The other bonus was the longer he sang like this the stronger his high notes became. He sang a wonderfully dramatic "My Heart Stood Still" on the same session. But the strongest singing of this group of sessions came a couple of days later when he delivered a fabulous rendering of "Great Day." It may not have been "bel canto" but it was certainly "can belto."

With regard to your comments on "Seasons" I'm not quite sure what you mean when you describe it as a "soft" sound. Most of it was done in a different studio - but it was mixed in the same studio as the Palladium album and "Beautiful Memories." And with the same engineer - Steve Taylor. The main difference is that it was recorded after Bing had suffered that terrible fall. And while he was clearly frailer than before, we all thought his voice had an

amazing resonance - especially on "September Song" which, everyone agrees, is vastly superior to his former and rather unremarkable 1943 version. Just ask Leslie Gaylor about this. He was present at the sessions. As for Vernon Duke's complex and sophisticated "Autumn In New York," this is every bit as good as the Sinatra 1957 version, recorded when Frank was 41 and at the peak of his powers. Bing, on the other hand, was 74 and almost at the end of his life yet he displays a richness of tone and breath control that would be the envy of singers half his age. And his pitch could not have been truer.

To give a slight measure of ground to you, I will say that "Seasons" was not quite the album we wanted it to be. If time had permitted, I would like to have taken more time with the mixing. In fact, I would have liked another two sessions in which we would have added Gershwin's "Summertime," Burke and Van Heusen's "Sleigh Ride In July," Johnny Mercer and Ralph Burns' "Early Autumn," swinging versions of "Easter Parade" and "Winter Wonderland" plus Mel Torme's "The Christmas Song" and Irving Berlin's "Let's Start The New Year Right." But time, unfortunately, was not on our side. Other than that, I have no complaints about the album. Pete Moore's orchestrations are among the best he ever wrote. In fact, Bing himself (who was not usually given to glowing compliments) said to Pete. "That's the finest string sound I've ever worked with."

Moreover, the album went on to win the MTA Award as "The Best Middle-of-the-Road Vocal album of 1977" and recouped its cost within a month of release.

However, if you think the sound is "diffused," I can only apologise. I didn't mix it to disguise that wonderful voice and I can say, hand-on-heart, that I certainly didn't set out to confuse you personally. But I do thank you, David, for your glowing remarks about the U.A. material which I hope we can get issued this year in time for the 20th anniversary.

Thanks for your support and please pass on my best wishes to all of your Australian colleagues.

**Ken Barnes**

*(Editor: What a splendid response from Ken to David's request and we thank him for taking the trouble to give us so much information.)*

# LES POUPEES DE PARIS

My queries about this show in the last edition of BING brought a swift response from Edwin Garcia in New York. Edwin sent me a photocopy of the album cover and from it I learnt that Sid and Marty Krofft set up a puppet show in 1961 called 'Les Poupees de Paris'. The show was seen at the Seattle World's Fair and then on April 22, 1964 it opened at the New York World's Fair with a new all-star soundtrack. This soundtrack was recorded at RCA Victor's Music Center of the World in Hollywood, probably early in 1964, and as we know, Bing and Frank Sinatra took part in a short sketch called 'The Bathtub Scene'. Other voices used in the show were Pearl Bailey, Milton Berle, Cyd Charisse, Gene Kelly, Liberace, Jayne Mansfield, Tony Martin and Phil Silvers.

# LOST LYRICS

UK members will know that Desmond Carrington has a section in his Radio 2 show when he seeks help to identify the title of a song from just a few lines of it. We have a similar problem. On the David Frost Show in 1971 and also on the Parkinson Show in 1972, Bing referred to a song called 'One Fleeting Hour' which he had sung as a boy in the Parish Hall. The words Bing sang on those 1970s shows were:

"When the twilight of eve dims the sun's last ray and the shades of the night gather fast,
there's one fleeting hour that I'd prayed would stay,
Full of joy and of pain that's passed."

Can anyone identify this song? We can't track it down anywhere. Is it a poem?

# A CROSBY MARATHON

Member Ron Field was featured in BING 110 and he described how he had a radio programme called 'Mainly Bing' on Community Radio station 2VOX near Sydney, Australia. Since that time, Ron continued with his programme until last Christmas Eve when show number 204 was his last for that particular radio station. The first 60 shows were for an hour each with the balance running for 2 hours. Ron took pride in hardly ever repeating a song. As part of his final work for the radio station, Ron sought permission to do a 'Crosby Marathon' from midnight to 6:00 a.m. on three nights in December and this was readily granted. He picked songs from both ends of Bing's career and he played songs from 1928 first, then songs from 1977, then 1929 followed by 1976. Ron eventually got to 1933 and 1968 respectively and in all he played 338 songs!

Ron has now moved to another area and is already in talks with the Community Radio station there about continuing his 'Mainly Bing' programme and also doing a weekly 'Crosby Marathon' between midnight and 5:00 a.m. each Friday night. Ron is yet another ICC member who works tremendously hard to promote Bing and we wish him continuing success.

# 'HUMANETTE' ??

**We have just come across the following which was part of an advert for the Orpheum, Los Angeles for June 5, 1931.**

> **ADDED ATTRACTIONS** RKO Radio 'Humanette' with Bing Crosby and his Rhythm Boys.

I assume that this is a short film but Gary Hamann, who found it, thinks it may be a live appearance. Has any one heard of any shorts from RKO called 'Humanette' ? This would be a great one to find if it is a film. Interesting to see that it is 'Bing Crosby and his Rhythm Boys'. This

was just after the Rhythm Boys had walked out of the Cocoanut Grove and whilst there was still a Union ban on other musicians working with them.

Also earlier this year, I spotted some more 'unknown' Bing films whilst going through old copies of Variety magazine. These are:

May 8, 1936 -Will Rogers trailer - Bing is seen in this nine minute film singing 'Home on the Range'. The trailer was shown in theatres throughout the USA during the Will Rogers Memorial Fund Drive, May 22-28.

September 22, 1943 - Variety states that "Paramount has produced a special trailer starring Bing Crosby for promotion of Christmas Seals this year for the National Tuberculosis Association."

'Anybody's Kids' - made at Paramount in April, 1945 with his four boys to support the War Loan Drive. This may have been released to coincide with Father's Day (June?).

Aug 21,1945 Bing made a short film at Paramount for the War Activities Committee asking High School students to return to school instead of continuing to work.

It would be marvellous if these forgotten shorts turned up.

# Other video bits and pieces

Gwen Harvey sent me two videos which include brief extracts featuring Bing. These are:-

**Hollywood - My Home Town**
This is a re-run of a 1962 TV show and it features comedian Ken Murray showing clips from his days in Hollywood including some of his home movies. Bing appears after 21 minutes and there are several shots of him with horses and on the golf course. After 35 minutes, Bing and his four sons are shown playing baseball on a sand lot near their home in Hollywood. I would guess that this footage is from 1950 or so. Rare shots which I have never seen before. The video runs for sixty minutes and many Hollywood stars are featured including Gary Cooper, Jean Harlow, Charlie Chaplin, Bob Hope and Maurice Chevalier (his first screen test is shown). Issued by Orbit Media Ltd. in their Screen Classics series to celebrate 100 years of cinema, the number is ORB 0016.

**Hollywood - The Fabulous Era**
Again part of Orbit's Screen Classics series, this sixty minute video looks at the great days of Hollywood. Narrated by Henry Fonda, it was probably the pilot for the series 'Hollywood and the Stars' when it was first shown in 1962. Bing is seen only briefly, first in a shot at the race track and then in a very rare piece of film which appears to be from the Cocoanut Grove, circa 1930. Much to my amazement, Bing (with moustache), Frank McHugh and Charles Butterworth are shown singing a song dressed as women. What it was all about I don't know and unfortunately you cannot hear what is being sung. Incredible! Apart from this, the video is very interesting to anyone who has a fascination with Hollywood. The number is ORB 0015.

**Malcolm Macfarlane**

# BING IN THE USA

**Wig gives us the Stateside news**

# REMEMBERING BING

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of Bing's passing, and it is gratifying to report a strong and growing interest in his films, recordings, and radio and television programs throughout the United States and Canada. After so many years of relative disinterest in Bing's incomparable musical legacy, the recent and continuing increase in ICC membership on this side of the Atlantic demonstrates that Bing is still very much with us, and his many talents continue to provide a great deal of pleasant, wholesome entertainment for every age group, even in the late 1990's. And long may Bing continue to do so.

# BING ON TELEVISION

Bing's films have again been featured regularly over the past four months on various nation-wide cable television stations in the United States, in addition to occasional showings on broadcast networks such as ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC. As usual, Bing's "holiday favorites" were prominent between Thanksgiving and New Year's, especially "Holiday Inn", "Going My Way", "The Bells of St. Mary's" and "White Christmas". And the local public broadcasting stations in the Washington, D. C. area (PBS) even repeated the documentary "Bing-The Legendary Years" this year on Christmas Day.

American Movie Classics, Cinemax, the Disney Channel and Turner Classic Movies have shown the following Bing films on their cable channels in recent months:

<u>November 1996</u>
Blue Skies - A Connecticut Yankee - Going My Way - High Society - Holiday Inn - Road To Bali - Road To Morocco - Road To Rio - Road To Singapore - Road To Utopia - Road To Zanzibar - Say One For Me

<u>December 1996</u>
A Bing Crosby Christmas - Blue Skies - A Connecticut Yankee - Emperor Waltz - Going My Way - Holiday Inn - Road To Bali - Road To Morocco - Road To Rio - Road To Singapore - Road To Utopia - Road To Zanzibar - Say One For Me - Welcome Stranger

<u>January 1997</u>
A Connecticut Yankee - Going My Way - High Society - Robin and the Seven Hoods - Say One For Me

February 1997
A Connecticut Yankee - High Society - Robin and the Seven Hoods - Sgt. Bilko Presents Bing Crosby

# "BING CROSBY'S ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD"

The latest video from fellow ICC members Ron Hall and Bob DeFlores of FESTIVAL FILMS is a detailed review of Bing's rise to fame in Hollywood between 1925 and 1933. Their new video collection includes a number of rare shorts, newsreel clips and excerpts from feature films, including "Hollywood On Parade", "Check and Double Check", "Reaching For The Moon", "Confessions of a Co-Ed" and especially Bing's complete 1933 Paramount short "Please" which, alone, makes this a most valuable addition to everyone's video collection.

Copies of "Bing Crosby's Road To Hollywood" can be ordered directly from Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, Minnesota 55331 (American NTSC standard, only) at a cost of $29.95, postpaid.

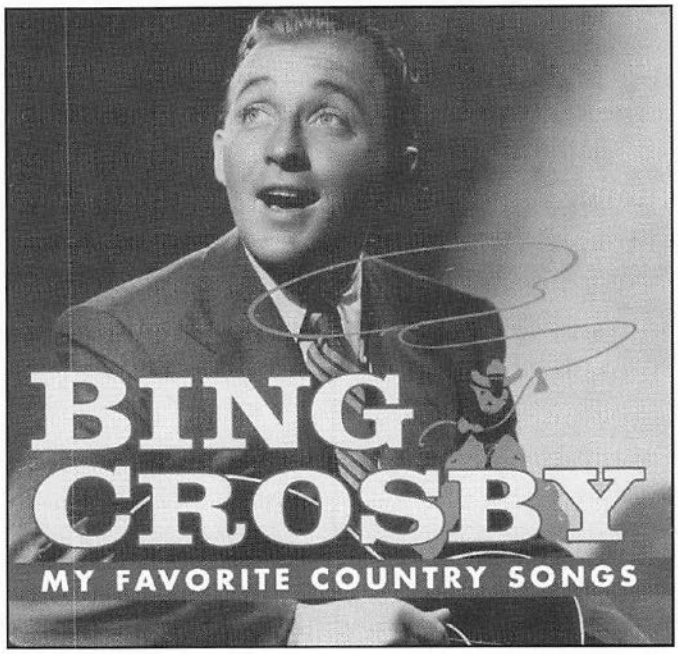
Ron Hall also has announced that Bing's first known short from 1929, "Two Plus Fours" (featuring the Rhythm Boys), has been restored by the Film Archive at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and may become available to collectors at some future date. And, perhaps even more surprising, the first reel (of two) of Bing's long-lost 1933 Paramount short "Just An Echo" also has been acquired and restored by the UCLA Film Archive. This reel is scheduled to be shown to the public for the first time in over sixty years at a film festival in Syracuse, New York in March. As Ron Hall plans to attend the festival, I have asked him to write an article about "Just An Echo" for the next issue of BING.

# MCA SPECIAL PRODUCTS COMPACT DISCS

The Special Products Division of MCA Records has released the first in a planned series of Bing's Decca recordings on budget-priced compact discs. These CDs are available only through certain speciality music stores (such as Circuit City and Tower Records) and various mail order companies.

The first CD in the series is entitled "Bing Crosby: My Favorite Country Songs" and contains ten Decca recordings from the 1930's and 1940's. Fellow ICC member Bob Zipkin of MCA Special Products has informed me that others in this series will be released later this year. They will include "Favorite Hawaiian Songs", "Favorite Love Songs" and "Favorite Hymns".

If you are not able to find a copy of "Favorite Country Songs", it can be ordered by mail from Collector's Choice Music, P.O. Box 838, Itasca, Illinois 60143. Their catalog number is BFMSP09822, and the cost is $8.95, plus $4.95 postage (per order). Collector's Choice also will provide a free, 100 page full-color illustrated catalog with each order, which includes several additional CDs by Bing.




**OTHER BING COMPACT DISCS BY MAIL ORDER**

In response to many requests from ICC members who do not have access to a good music store in their area where they can obtain Bing's compact discs, here are three mail order companies which should be able to fulfil most of your requests for CDs that are currently available. I have dealt with each of these firms and can recommend them to fellow members.

(1) Select Circles, P.O. Box 302, Riverside, Connecticut 06878
(Telephone 203-661-8421 — Chick Wilson)
A specialist dealer in hard-to-find CDs by Bing and other popular vocalists. Can provide most British and European CDs reviewed in BING. Chick is a fellow ICC member.

(2) Mr. Nostalgia, P.O. Box 26414, Tamarac, Florida 33320
(Telephone 954-726-5420 — Charlie Morrison)
Features orchestras and vocalists from the Big Band era including Bing. Provides a detailed, bi-monthly catalog of new CD releases, including all song titles.

(3) Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato, California 94948
(Telephone 415-898-1609 — Ren Brown)
Features early jazz and orchestras and vocalists from the Big Band era, including Bing. Can provide many British and European CDs. Issues a detailed quarterly catalog of new CD releases, including all song titles.

# BING CROSBY COLLECTION AT GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

The world's largest collection of memorabilia and recordings devoted to Bing is maintained by the Gonzaga

University Library in Spokane, Washington, which Bing attended from 1921 until 1924, before he left with Al Rinker for Los Angeles and a half century of show business fame and immortality. The Gonzaga Library welcomes visits from ICC members, as well as inquiries about their Crosby collection by telephone or letter, and now via the internet.

I have been pleased to assist Gonzaga in responding to the inquiries that they receive, some of which are pretty "far out" Recent examples have included "What was the name of Bing's turkey in "Holiday Inn"? ("Mr. Jones"—or "Jonesy"—according to Bing); "What was Bing's shoe size"' (I wasn't sure of that one, but my wife, Laura, guessed size eight, and another ICC member offered eight-and-a-half); and "Where can we obtain a copy of "Straight Down the Middle" (I had that one, which later turned up on the sound track of an advertising promo for a golfing equipment firm!).

The Gonzaga Library still seeks additions for its Bing Crosby collection, especially printed materials such as newspaper clippings, magazine articles, books, etc. In particular, Gonzaga would like to complete its holdings of BING magazine. I have been able to provide a complete set from #32 to date, but most earlier issues are not yet available at Gonzaga. If ICC members have copies of any BING issues from #l through #25, plus issues #27 and #31, that they would be willing to donate to Gonzaga, would they please contact me so that I can make the necessary arrangements? All such contributions will be greatly appreciated, both by Gonzaga and the ICC Management Team. We would like to have as complete a record as possible of all ICC magazines and other publications placed in the permanent files of the Bing Crosby Collection at Gonzaga, and your assistance in this regard will be invaluable. Please let me hear from you if you can help with this project.

**Wig Wiggins**

# Bing on the Internet (3)

**Frans van der Kolff sends us another update of what's happening on the Web**

## Introduction

Bing's presence on the Internet continues to grow, and it's really amazing to see how much information has become available in only one short year on this new medium. Since our explorations in the April and August issues of BING, there now are no less than four sites devoted exclusively to Bing available on the Internet. This article deals with these sites. Between the four of them they contain a wealth of information about Bing Crosby, his music and his contemporaries. The larger these websites get, and some cover several hundred pages, the more difficult it becomes to describe them to you in only a few words. Therefore, this overview unfortunately just skims the top of the iceberg, but at least it will give you, hopefully some idea of Bing on the Internet at the end of 1996.

## 1. Where the blue of the night

Let's return, first, to Where the blue of the night, the site of H. Shaun Lippy (http://www.cen.uiuc.edu/~h-lippy/binghome.html), mentioned in an earlier issue. Since then, a page with information about Crosby societies around the world (including the International Crosby Circle) has been added, together with a page that lists Bing's TV appearances for the current month.

## 2. Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day

The first of the three new sites devoted to Bing, entitled Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day (http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/pennvalley/biology/lewis/crosby/bing.htm) has been constructed by Steven Lewis. He tells us the following about himself:

> *"I have been a fan of Bing Crosby since my first viewing of a "Road" picture. I especially loved Bing's voice and interpretative style, but did not become a Crosby collector until after his death. These pages are intended for entertainment and education ... education because we can learn from the successes or failures in other people's lives. These pages were first posted in June, 1996, on the Web server of the Metropolitan Community Colleges in Kansas City, Missouri, where I am employed as a biology instructor."*

Steven's site contains a lot of information. Let's take a look at some of the chapters of his site, for instance the **Bing Crosby FAQ**s (Frequently Asked Questions). Steven lists 68 of these. A click with the computer mouse on one of these, often quite intriguing, questions gives the answer. Like the response to question number 43. *What song was a movie hit for both Bing and Elvis?*

Answer: Bing shared a hit in common with Elvis Presley. Robin and Rainger wrote "Blue Hawaii" for the 1937 Crosby movie "Waikiki Wedding". Two decades later Elvis reprised the tune quite successfully in his own movie that took the name of the song. Elvis also had success with a holiday song "Blue Christmas," which contrasts quite sharply with the lyrics of Bing's biggest hit, "White Christmas.

And then there's question number 65. *What did Bing's family, friends, and co-workers say about him?* Steven has compiled an impressive list of over fifty quotes. Here are two of the lesser known:

*Count Basie, composer, talks about his 1972 recording session with Bing.*

"... we spent a three-day session making an album with Bing Crosby. I don't remember who got that one through, but I was very thrilled at the idea that we were going to be doing something with the Bingle.... He had put his own personal touch on so many fine tunes that had become standards down through the years. Whenever old Bing took to a tune, there was never any question about who that was. His personal touch was a standard in itself. We did eleven tracks during those three sessions. There was no problem running them down; but they didn't run out as great as I had hoped. I don't really know what happened that everything didn't come off better than it did. I really don't know, but I don't think that was really Bing's schtick.... But I was still very happy about the whole thing, because it gave me a chance to do work with him. I really think Bing was right at home when he could have his pipe and Pops [Louis Armstrong]. I think that was really his life, anything he and Louis could do. They fit so good. That's what I was thinking about all during the while we were in the studio those three days. If old Louis just would have walked in there on any of those numbers, everything would have fallen in place.... Bing and Pops were something together." (Count Basie, Good Morning Blues, p362)

*Bob Hope talks about Bing's influence at Paramount in the 40s.*

"In one picture Bing and I were to do a scene where both of us were in a double bed. But when Bing came to bed he was still wearing his hat, a fedora. So I said to him, 'Bingo, nobody comes to bed wearing a hat. How about removing it?' He refused. Evidently he didn't have his toupee on and he was too lazy to put it on. Then Butler [the director] asked him to remove his hat. And when he still wouldn't do it, Butler sent for three executives from the front office and explained the problem to them. One of them was Y. Frank Freeman, the head of the studio. Freeman said he'd handle it, and went over to Bing who was in bed with his hat on and said, 'Mr. Crosby, is everything all right? Are you happy with the picture?' And Bing nodded, 'Yes, everything was fine.' So Freeman turned to Butler, barked, 'Okay, roll 'em,' and walked away. They were scared to death to say anything to Bing to upset him, so we ended up shooting the scene with Bing's hat on, and I covered it with some joke like, 'Do you always get your night-caps from Stetson?'" (quoted by Arthur Marx, The Secret Life of Bob Hope, p164).

The **What's New?** chapter deals with all kinds of news items concerning our kind of music. All of them are Crosby-related and here are some examples from this page. The underlined words are links to more information on the subject.

"Can't remember the lyrics to one of Bing's hit recordings? Then check out lyrics made famous by Bing." [A link is made to a web site with music lyrics]

"Is there a radio station in your area that broadcasts the big bands, jazz, easy listening, nostalgia or "music of your life"? We may be able to interest them in broadcasting Arne Fogel's weekly one-hour tribute to Bing Crosby, Bing Crosby On Record, which has been on the air for 11 years in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area."

Or, simply, "Dorothy Lamour, 1914-96."

At the **"Bulletin Board"** you can send and read messages concerning Bing, register your Crosby wants list, make enquiries etc. On October 22nd I counted 28 messages on this page.

**"Crosby Links"** list relevant sites on the Internet for Crosby fans and collectors. You can search for Crosby CDs and videos; look at other Crosby websites or sites of fellow artists like Bob Hope, Al Jolson, Ella Fitzgerald, etc.

Steven Lewis's site also contains **audio fragments** of Bing's songs and **"The Swooner vs. the Crooner"** and **"1954: End of the Crosby Era"** are two articles Steven wrote for BINGANG, the journal of Club Crosby.

**"Search these Bing pages"** - An on-line search engine (a catalogue) with which you can search Steven's site for anything pertaining to Bing, by typing in one or more keywords.

Steven's website is large and technically sophisticated. The above hardly skims the surface, but there are other sites that deserve a mention in this overview, like

## 3. Bing : A page dedicated to Bing Crosby - the greatest singer of them all

This is the site of Judy McDonald, created May 1, 1996 (http://ac.acusd.edu/History projects/ crosby/ bing. html). It contains a selection of black and white and colour pictures of Bing and an article by Judy, in which she discusses Bing Crosby's life, the great contribution he made to radio and his career into television. Here are some excerpts from Judy's article.

"May 2, 1903, Mrs. Catherine Crosby of Tacoma, Washington gave birth to a beautiful bouncing set of ears. Harry Lillis Crosby, known to most of the world as Bing Crosby was born into a Irish Catholic family, brought up by two loving parents and surrounded by siblings and friends. Who would have known that the star high school football, baseball and basketball player would one day be the richest man in California? Bing Crosby was not only a great entertainer, but a national treasure. [...] After seeing Bing at the Paramount theater, top heads of studios started calling about starring roles. Radio brought Bing into 20 million homes ever week. (The One and Only Bing, Bob Thomas, Associated Press) Yet in 1934 his radio show for Woodbury soap was a failure and his

sponsor fired him before the end of his 39-week contract. This was probably Woodbury's biggest mistake because just one year later Bing signed with the Kraft Music Hall, and stayed at the top with Kraft for twenty years. [...] It was once reported that Bing carried around a Thesaurus and was constantly brushing up on new words he could fit into any conversation. Bing was able to use his talent of adlibbing with his partner for many films, Bob Hope. Lines like, "You know, Bob, from the rear you look like a sackful of cats being carried to the river." Bob Hope would come to the Kraft Music Hall and Bing would visit Bob's show armed with one liners that the writers came up with. Many people thought that Bing and Bob's insults were sometimes meant not to be funny, but Bing said. "It was easier for our writers to write abusive dialogue than any other kind. When our Hatfield -McCoy routine became a byword with the public, we did nothing to derail it. We developed and expanded it, and pitched in merrily to think of insults to hurl at each other."

Judy's website links to another article on Bing, this one by Steve Schoenherr, which was originally published in the May 1996 issue of the electronic journal "ready.to.ware" (http://www.tir.com/~rtw/bing.htm). Steve's very interesting article, "Der Bingle Technology : the technology of his art", tells about Bing's involvement with recording technology in the 1940s. "The man who would have the greatest impact on the mass media in the 20th century was not an inventor or scientist, but a crooner."

## 4. The Bing Crosby page of Eric Rohr

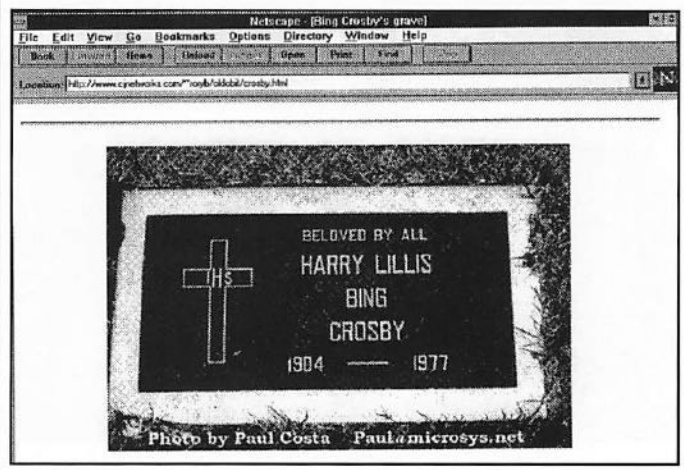
Eric Rohr's Crosby Page (http://www.cjnetworks.com/~roryb/bing.html) consists of the following article. His hobby is collecting obituaries and in his site he also has pages about singers/musicians Bix Beiderbecke, Big Bopper, Harry Chapin, Walter Hyatt and Dennis Wilson. Here are two small excerpts from his story about Bing:
"In the mid 1930s Bing met Bob Hope and Paramount would team them up, along with Dorothy Lamour (who passed away just this last month), for several "Road" pictures. The two became best friends, performing on Bing's radio show, Bob's radio show and touring for the troops during WWII. The two would also tour the states raising money for war bonds. They appeared here in my hometown of Topeka, KS on June 3,1945, at the Topeka Country Club. When a low flying plane buzzed by Hope yelled into a microphone, "That's my laundry, drop it at the hotel, boys." Bing, who at this point had four sons came back with: "Man! I thought for a minute that was the stork again." [...] "Bing passed away doing what he loved best, playing golf. He seemed to favor his left arm during his game with Manuel Pinero at the Maraleja Golf Club but still managed to win, due to his handicap. Walking back to the clubhouse, he just dropped. He died instantly from a heart attack."

## 5. Bing's page at Tripod

Then there's this page, still "under construction" as they say it on Internet, from Tripod (http://burgoyne.com/pages/midijeep/index.html). Not much to tell about it yet. It shows a Crosby logo and the following lines:
"This Page Is Dedicated To The Talent and Mastery Of The Late Bing Crosby. He Is Considered The Greatest Entertainer Of Our Time! We Cherish The Beautiful Elegance Of His Vocal Runs, Dance and His Personality. His Sacrifice During The War Years Was Most Commendable and The Morale He Gave To Help Unite This Great Country Will Never Be Forgotten."

It will be interesting to see what this site develops into.

**Frans van der Kolff**




*(Editor: It really is amazing what is happening on the Internet and we have already obtained new members by having our details on Shaun Lippy's site. I have seen printouts of some of the entries on the Bulletin Board maintained by Steven Lewis and it is surprising how much Bing related activity is taking place. I am sure we shall be reading a lot more about the Internet in BING in the next few years. We thank Frans for his diligence in keeping us up-to-date. I am keen to get on to the Internet myself and when I do, I shall see if I can set up the ICC's own site.)*

# PARADISE

**This is a well-known Bing song as I am sure you all know and it came to my mind when visiting the home of Don and Peter Haizelden in Long Sutton in Lincolnshire last November. But I am getting ahead of myself.**

Last year, Don Haizelden loaned Ron Bosley a number of photographs for possible inclusion in BING magazine. Ron wished to return them but did not want to trust them to the post. I suggested that Ron and I plus Michael Crampton ought to make the trip to Lincolnshire to return the photos. I had an ulterior motive as I had been to the Haizeldens' home on several occasions in the past and you have to see it to understand the scope of the Crosby collection residing there. I knew that Ron and Michael would be dumbfounded by it all as well.

We duly arrived at Brunswick House in Long Sutton just before noon after a long trip and were warmly welcomed by Don and Peter. Their property is an old house and the large kitchen has been converted into a Crosby archive (where food is sometimes prepared). As we entered, the Personal Computer was playing a Bing CD and the whole kitchen was decorated with framed film posters from all over the world. Michael and Ron quickly discovered the 78 collection and we were soon listening to rare items which had never sounded so good thanks to the filter system used by our hosts. Ron was to be seen delving through boxes of rare photos and cuttings whilst Michael looked at 78s and transcription discs he had only read about before. The extent of the 10" LP collection was also breathtaking and the hours passed by in a blur of music, photos, books, rare artefacts and so many never-before-seen records such as a German set of Bing's Musical Autobiography which has a German commentary overlaid on to Bing's linking comments. It really was a memorable experience and both Ron and Michael were as close to a Crosby 'Paradise' as they have ever been.

The photographs record what was a memorable day for all concerned. Our grateful thanks to Don and Peter for their generous hospitality.

**Malcolm Macfarlane**

*(Editor: As I mentioned in my editorial, there is a sad postscript because Don passed away in January. He was laid to rest at a Humanist ceremony when Bing's recordings of 'Beautiful Dreamer' and 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' were played. He will be sadly missed by those who knew him and our heartfelt sympathies go to Peter.)*

# ANOTHER SEASON: IT MIGHT AS WELL BE BING

The thought of Spring alone can be a kind of release and the actual arrival of the legendary season is usually a welcome liberation. For some reaching another Spring can be a joke against the calendar. We of a musical fraternity of singular selectivity are fortunate in being able to reduce the cold and dark of the abyss of Winter by sailing on the warm thermals of the voice of Bing which often earlier in a cold climate has helped to keep us insulated from the weather and sometimes a not always benign reality. Therefore let the hills of the unfolding seasons become alive with the sound of singing. Now we can have a celebration or in a more imaginative vernacular have a ball by wallowing in random aspects of things Bing.

As a first instance, let us consider the revealing list in the Winter 1996 issue of BING magazine of Cole Porter lyrics which contain some sly verbal barbs against Bing. Over the years there has been in print that Bing, well into his career, had a success with a record of one of Cole Porter's songs and the composer sent Bing a telegram stating 'You Waited Too Long'. In a sketch on a Bing radio show, Bing gives a 'nudge','nudge' innuendo about a sexual personal characteristic of Cole Porter. Some time ago, there was a quote in a journal by Tony Martin. He said that years ago when he recorded with the same label as Bing, Bing was offered 'Begin the Beguine' to record. Bing said he did not think much to the song and declined. Tony recorded the song and had a hit record. Perhaps all these aspects suggest an unacknowledged antipathy between the two major figures of that great musical era. If so they both must have mellowed because they came together with such wonderful effect in 'High Society'.

These random aspects lead to thoughts on film musicals. Bing was not in many film musicals that were conceived in purely cinematic terms. Many of Bing's films were vehicles for him and his co-stars with musical interludes. 'High

Society' had a cinematic format in which the music flowed naturally. 'Robin And The Seven Hoods' was a light hearted musical satire on all those 30s gangster movies. There was not much plot to slow down the musical interludes. The songs might not be in the same flight as those of 'High Society' but the film is very pleasant musically. Perhaps the Bing films with Fred Astaire were cinematic musicals although with pedestrian plots. Curiously the very early 'King Of Jazz', experimental for its time, was totally cinematic and in those terms holds up very well. Perhaps the chorus girls were not as dextrous as the later Eleanor Powell or Ann Miller and more physically robust but the musical is pleasant.

Bing recorded some songs from musicals that suited his voice like an audio glove, and were better sung than those who sang the songs originally. 'Gigi' was a good musical film and the performances in it were equal to the quality of the film but Bing's recording of title title song has never been surpassed. There is another good recording by Robert Goulet. Also there is the Broadway cast recording of the super musical, 'Guys And Dolls', and Sydney Chaplin gives a good performance but the fine song 'I've Never Been In Love Before' suits Bing perfectly. Bing's rendition is superlative and surely is one of his best performances. Strangely this song was eliminated from the film by Frank Loesser who wrote in its place 'The Eyes Of A Woman In Love'. For a song from this musical, 'If I Were A Bell' Bing teamed up with Patti Andrews on a recording. The adlibs and the rapport between Bing and Patti make this record a delight.

Sometimes Bing recorded commercially songs from his films with great success. If one's memory is correct, Dorothy Lamour in a Road film sang very pleasantly 'Constantly'. Bing made a studio recording of this song and it is a fine Bing record. The arrangement has a Latin bias thus also tickling ones toes. Bing also covered commercially one of Frank Sinatra's best songs from 'High Society' - 'You're Sensational'- and he gives Old Blue Eyes a run for his money. Bing on 50s radio covered a song from an early film musical entitled 'Cocktails For Two', a song given grievous bodily harm by Spike Jones. This catchy song hardly recovered from the treatment. Although a hilarious escapade for Spike, letting him loose on the sung was like letting the Marx Brothers loose in a brewery. The only other rendition I know, and a good one, is by Keely Smith.

To get back to Dorothy Lamour, and that is always a pleasure, she sang in a Road film, 'The Moon And The Willow Tree'. Bing covered this on a commercial recording and fascinating it is too. The song is a little mysterious. Did the lyric writer have Dorothy's character in mind and her attitude to the characters Bing and Bob were playing? Is the Moon, a well used romantic icon, representing Bob's light humorous romanticism and is the Willow Tree an image for Bing's straight-man singer of sad songs or conversely is the Moon an icon of Bing as a romantic troubadour and the Willow Tree an image of Bob as comedian with the integral sad side of comedy? Such can be the profundity of song lyrics.

Along with many of Bing's records, some musical film interludes linger in the mind. His singing to a child 'Melancholy Baby'. His ambling amiably along in a Road film singing 'Moonlight Becomes You' as though this was as natural as breathing. One could continue fermenting images of Bing through all the seasons but the unfolding enveloping light beckons AND so do the thousand natural, mundane jobs that domestic flesh is heir to.

**Ken Merry**

# Weekend at the Waldorf

On Saturday, May 7, 1983, a gathering of 216 people, all united in their dedication to Bing Crosby, took place at the prestigious Waldorf Hotel in London. The meeting was arranged by John Marshall to celebrate the 80th. anniversary of Bing's birth. Those attending included Bing's former butler Alan Fisher, Ken Twiss (from the Bing Crosby Historical Society), record producer Chris Ellis, Reg Bristo, Les Gaylor, George O'Reilly and entertainer Roy Chappell who sang many of Bing's old favourites. As a relatively new ICC member, I was there too and it was great to meet so many luminaries from the world of Crosbyana. The events were described in BING 68 and also in John Marshall's own magazine of the time, Crosby Chronicles.

John had written to celebrities all over the world in order to get their comments on Bing and he mounted a picture display showing the letters and telegrams. From Bob Hope, Kathryn Crosby, Alice Faye, Perry Como and so on to prominent British artists such as Spike Milligan, Stanley Black, Steve Race and Alan Dell, it was great to see so many kind words about Bing.

At the event, I was aware that John Marshall and his son, Jimmy, were busily videoing some of the action and I had never heard what had happened to the tape until recently. John had issued one or two copies at the time but his own master tape had been mislaid over the years. One of the copy tapes was recently returned to him (No, they didn't want their money back!) and John thoroughly enjoyed watching it again despite the rather primitive reproduction. John edited the tape the best he could using modern equipment and he sent a copy of the revised version to me. It was strange looking at the Waldorf event after so long but it brought a lot of it back to me. The camera John's son was using was a security camera which had been borrowed and high fidelity was not one of its qualities. The sound was recorded using a separate Sony reel-to-reel and was then matched with the video picture which is not easy to accomplish. How nice though to see and hear Frank Murphy speaking to Charles Culley, Reg Bristo addressing the gathering and Chris Ellis, Alan Fisher, George O'Reilly and Ken Twiss being interviewed. It was good to see some of Roy Chappell's act too.

I find that the understandable fuzziness of this 46 minute trip down Memory Lane can be aided by reducing the colour to a black and white image. Anyone who would like to have a copy of the tape, which costs £5.50, please contact John Marshall at 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD. As is his custom, John is perfectly happy to refund the money to anyone who is not satisfied with the tape.

**Malcolm Macfarlane**

# TRADING POST

**Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries**
**Please send all advertisements to the Editor**

**Andrew Perry,** 347d Ashingdon Rd., Rochford, Essex SS4 3DB
WANTED
Sheet music, song books, books, 78s, records.

**Larry Rivers,** 15 Newbury Court, Brook Lane, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 6LW
"I've decided to part with my whole collection of Bing. Something like 220 LPs (mostly in mint condition), a couple of hundred tapes, plus various books on Bing including 'Call Me Lucky'. Anyone interested please contact me direct. Also I've got the story of Bing's vocal progress on tapes. Narrated intermittently by myself and including commercial recordings, radio and film tracks. The tapes are £4 each."

**Creative Bound Inc.,** 151 Tansley Drive, P.O. Box 424, Carp, Ontario, Canada KOA 1LO

"A new book called 'Gord Atkinson's Showbill' which has a section on Bing Crosby, and many other references to him as well, is available from us for US $16.95 (CAN $19.95). Readers in the UK, Ireland and continental Europe can also obtain it from Gazelle Book Services Ltd, Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN, England (Phone 01524-68765) whilst in the USA it can be obtained from Quality Books Inc, 1003 W. Pines Road, Oregon, IL 61061-9860 (Phone 815-732-4450)."
(Editor: See the separate review elsewhere in BING of this very nice new book)

**Brian Dean,** 8 Ackers Lane, Stockton Heath, Warrington WA4 2UY (tel. after 6 p.m. 01925 263860)

FOR SALE
Four double-sided 10" shellac discs, 33 and a third speed, containing the broadcast of the Jerome Kern Memorial Concert on CBS from December, 9, 1945. The recording lasts approximately 56 minutes and apart from Bing, there are many other featured artists. Condition is variable but listenable. Offers please to Brian.

*(Editor: This looks to be a very rare item indeed and if you don't know the show in question, here is what 'Variety' magazine had to say about it on December, 12, 1945.*
*"Sunday, December 9th. witnessed a beautiful, splendidly handled tribute to the late Jerome Kern, who died in November. CBS, underwritten here by two successive half-hour awards from General Electric and Prudential, blended Nelson Eddy, on the west coast and Patrice Munsel from New York as co-hosts. Bing Crosby, Judy Garland, Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, Hildegarde and Jack Smith contributed with the expected results and there were nice sounds from the joint Robert Armbruster and Al Goodwin Orchestra. Topper of the night proved to be a duet by Eddy and Munsel, 3,000 of those radio miles apart, performing Kern's immortal 'Make Believe'. No disparity was to be detected and a shoulder to shoulder sound was on target. Oscar Hammerstein read a wire from Harry Truman with that genuine sense of this great gap in popular music. No one listening can have had doubts on that score."*

*Bing sang 'I've Told Every Little Star' and a snatch of 'More and More' as well as taking part in some nice dialogue with Patrice Munsel.)*

**Maurice Jackson,** 31 Gatenby, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6JU
"Does any member know where I could purchase a blazer pocket badge of Bing. Preferably our ICC badge. I already have the gold tie pin."

**Ron McCormick,** 15 Glebelands Rd., Knutsford, Cheshire (tel. 01565 633668)
WANTED: LP (or taping) of 'Martha Davis and Spouse'. Paramount Records - ABC 160.

**R. J. Muirhead,** 74 Firbank Grove, East Calder, West Lothian EH53 0DY
WANTED: CD 'Bing Crosby Christmas Album' Polygram 314-520211-2 or information re a source of supply in the UK.

**Ken Crossland,** 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP (tel. 01564 730108)
BINGANG, the official magazine of the American Club Crosby, is published twice yearly and is available from Ken Crossland. Annual subscription £11. For free sample copy, write to Ken enclosing a 36p stamp.

**Michael Crampton,** 19 Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 2NL
**FOR SALE:** Michael is dealing with the sale of 239 LPs and many singles on behalf of our late member, Mr. Cox. 95 of the LPs are by Bing whilst other artists range from Shirley Bassey to Maria Callas and the Goons to Jelly Roll Morton. Contact Michael for details if there are any particular LPs you are seeking.
**Back Copies of BING**
Issue nos. 94, 95, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 110 and 113 are available for £2 each plus postage. Order direct from Michael.

**Geoff White,** 2 Rose En Ave, Cromford, Derbys DE4 3QP

"In 1975, I had the great pleasure and honour of meeting Bing at the Turnberry Hotel. He autographed a photograph of himself for me and then shook my hand. At the time there were quite a few fans taking photographs. I wonder if any ICC member has a picture of this. I should be most grateful for a copy if they have."

**********

## Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs. Please write to the addresses shown for further details.

**Club Crosby, BINGANG**
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(HomePage:http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/pennvalley/biology/lewis/crosby/bing.htm)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

**Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,**
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257)

**The Queensland Bing Crosby Society,**
John Wright, 17 Thurecht Parade, Scarborough, Queensland 4020, Australia

**The Victorian Bing Crosby Society**
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

**********

## OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

**We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.**

**Sinatra Music Society,** 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU
This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis. The magazine includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £10 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details.

**Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch,** c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

**The Dean Martin Association,** P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR

**The Sammy Davis Jr Association,** c/o Paul Iacovou, 6 Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

**The Judy Garland Club** c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25 Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

**The Doris Day Society,** 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

**International Friends of Gordon Macrae,** c/o Mrs. Pat Robinson, 47 Lea Mill Park Drive, Yeaden, Leeds LS19 7YH

**Tony Bennett Appreciation Society,** c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

**Pat Boone Appreciation Society,** P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN

**Guy Mitchell Appreciation Society,** 11 Kierhill Rd., Balloch, Cumbernauld, Glasgow G68 9BH

**Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society,** c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY

**Alma Cogan Appreciation Society,** c/o Stephen Woods, 9 Canterbury Avenue, Bowerham, Lancaster LA1 4AU

**The International Petula Clark Society,** c/o Terry Young, 38 Elmley Way, Margate, Kent CT9 4ES

# Keith Parkinson's CELLULOID CROSBY

There are a few films which were popular in their day but which have lost almost all of their original appeal. Some fifty years ago, Bing made brief appearances in three of them. The key word is 'brief' so you'll be ahead of me in naming 'Star Spangled Rhythm' (1942), 'Duffy's Tavern' (1945) and 'Variety Girl' (1947).

Paramount led the field with this sort of compendium in the thirties. The studio's first effort of the new decade was 'Las Vegas Nights' (1941) which provided Frank Sinatra with his screen debut singing 'Dolores' in front of Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra. There were other studios which attempted to give some semblance of a plot to glue together a string of unrelated acts. Republic's 'Hit Parade of 1941' (released in 1940, of course) and 'Melody Ranch' (1940) gave big screen exposure to the likes of Kenny Baker, Frances Langford and Ann Miller in the former and Jimmy Durante and Gene Autry in the latter. Yet these films were somewhat different to Paramount's efforts of the decade. Not only were they made on a

comparative shoestring, they also used studio talent to do their own thing. The singers would sing and the dancers would dance. In 'Star Spangled Rhythm' and 'Variety Girl', Paramount used its contract players to perform the unexpected. Thus we are treated to the previously unknown vocal talents of Eddie 'Rochester' Anderson, Paulette Goddard and Alan Ladd.

Paramount's backlot has been exposed on the screen more than that of any other studio. Think of the number of times its famous arched main entrance has been used as an establishing shot. Both 'Star Spangled Rhythm' and 'Variety Girl' saved the building of expensive sets by filming the main action within the studio confines. Of 'Star Spangled Rhythm', James Agee wrote in 'Time' magazine: "A Variety show including everyone at Paramount who was not overseas, in hiding or out to lunch." The film made the box office top ten for 1943. In the 1942 film, Victor Moore, as Paramount's gatekeeper, pretends to be a studio executive and shows a group of servicemen around the shooting stages. They encounter well known performers involved in sketches and musical numbers.

Five years later, in 'Variety Girl', two females in search of a career in the movies, played by Mary Hatcher and Olga San Juan, tour the backlot and encounter many of the same well known performers involved in sketches and musical numbers. The film featured in Variety's list of top thirty money making films of 1946/47. The New York Mirror's review of the film ran: "Probably every star on the Paramount lot has been rounded up. There's a tenuous plot but it gets lost frequently, which is just as well. A flock of top names appear briefly, sometimes so briefly you barely see them." In both 'Variety Girl' and the earlier 'Star Spangled Rhythm', Bing was given top billing.

Sandwiched in between these studio bound efforts was 'Duffy's Tavern'. It was also studio bound but the sets were specially built. Victor Moore is again used. This time he is a record studio boss staging a benefit show in tandem with innkeeper Ed Gardner (Duffy). Based on the popular U.S. radio show, the film paraded the talents of Cass Daley, Sonny Tufts, Billy De Wolfe and a dozen or so others. When John Douglas Eames described it as "a million dollar cast struggling with ten cents worth of material" he got it right.

We are concerned here with the Crosby content of this trio of films. In all three Bing plays himself and is not an integral part of the plot. He also appears twice in each film. In 'Star Spangled Rhythm' he has brief footage where he is shown bringing son Gary to the studio. His main appearance shows him singing 'Old Glory', a song he never recorded for record release. In 'Duffy's Tavern' he is joined by Betty Hutton, Sonny Tufts, Diana Lynn, Billy De Wolfe, Cass Daley and Howard Da Silva to sing a parody of 'Swinging on a Star'. Later he is seen briefly with his four sons. In addition, three of his early recordings are used, although Bing is not on screen when they are played on a phonograph. The songs are 'Learn to Croon', 'Please' and 'Love In Bloom'. In 'Variety Girl' he takes part in a golfing sketch with Bob Hope. Later on he duets 'Harmony' with him. Unaccountably, the song was omitted from the film's UK release prints.

*Bing sings 'Old Glory'*

Star studded films were prominent in the 1940s only because the studio contract system prevailed. Contractees were generally expected to appear in whatever vehicle the studio thought would give them a return on their investment. Few actors had the power of veto and as a result some patently unsuitable casting took place in the interests of expanding box-office appeal. The crumbling of the studio system in the 1950s saw the demise of this type of film, but not before some embarrassing performances were left for posterity to gloat over. Musicals were an obvious way of committing a string of acts to film. The complete list of these 1940s entertainments is quite lengthy but sufficiently intriguing to study. Excluding those films mentioned earlier in this article, the decade offered the following two dozen efforts to filmgoers in what was Hollywood's most prolific era.

**1941**

The Great American Broadcast (20th. Century Fox). About radio's pioneering days. Kate Smith, Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Rudy Vallee, Walter Winchell, The Ink Spots, The Nicholas Brothers and The Wiere Brothers.

Time Out For Rhythm (Columbia). Feuding theatrical agents allow time for speciality acts to perform Ann Miller, Rudy Vallee, Six Hits and a Miss, Glen Gray and his Casa Loma Orchestra, The Three Stooges.

**1942**

Strictly in the Groove (Universal). Hotelier's son is sent to dude ranch. Jimmy Wakely, Dinning Sisters, Grace McDonald, Ozzie Nelson and his Orchestra, Martha Tilton.

Rhythm Parade (Monogram). Misunderstanding in a Los Angeles night club. Ted Fiorita and his Orchestra, The Mills Brothers, Candy Candido, Gale Storm.

**1943**

Reveille With Beverly (Columbia). Ann Miller plays a disc jockey. Frank Sinatra, Bob Crosby, Freddie Slack, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, The Mills Brothers, The Radio Rogues.

Hit Parade of 1943 (Republic) A washed up songwriter

seeks inspiration. Dorothy Dandridge, The Music Maids, The Golden Gate Quartet, Freddy Martin and his Orchestra, Ray McKinley.

Follow the Band (Universal). A young farmer finds himself in a New York night club. Frances Langford, the King's Men, Skinnay Ennis, Alvino Rey, The King Sisters, Ray Eberle.

Stage Door Canteen (United Artists). Set in the New York servicemen's venue of the title. Gracie Fields, Ray Bolger, Edgar Bergen, Yehudi Menuhin, Harpo Marx, Ed Wynn, Count Basie, Peggy Lee, Kay Kyser, Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra.

Thousands Cheer (MGM). Entertainment at a servicemen's camp. Eleanor Powell, Red Skelton, June Allyson, Lena Horne, Kay Kyser, Bob Crosby, Judy Garland, Kathryn Grayson, Gene Kelly.

This is the Army (Warner Bros). Irving Berlin's musical homage to the American soldier. Frances Langford, Gertrude Niesen, Kate Smith, Joe Louis, Irving Berlin.

Thank Your Lucky Stars (Warner Bros). Studio contract players entertain soldiers overseas. Dinah Shore, Spike Jones and his City Slickers, Errol Flynn, Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan.

Crazy House (Universal) Olsen and Johnson are a pair of madcap movie makers. Allan Jones, Marion Hutton, Count Basie and his Orchestra, the Delta Rhythm Boys, Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, (as Holmes and Watson).

**1944**

Cowboy Canteen (Columbia) A ranch is transformed into a club for servicemen. The Mills Brothers, Jimmy Wakely, Tex Ritter, Roy Acuff.

Two Girls and a Sailor (MGM). June Allyson and Gloria De Haven meet Van Johnson in a canteen run for servicemen. Lena Horne, Virginia O'Brien, Jimmy Durante, Ben Blue, Gracie Allen, Harry James, Xavier Cugat, Lina Romay, Helen Forrest.

Four Jills in a Jeep (20th. Century Fox). Glamorised version of U.S.O. camp tour. Martha Raye, Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Carmen Miranda, George Jessel, Phil Silvers, Dick Haymes, Helen Logan, the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra.

Jam Session (Columbia). Ann Miller wins a dance contest to go to Hollywood. Charlie Barnett and his Orchestra, Louis Armstrong, Glen Gray and his Casa Loma Orchestra, Nan Wynn, the Pied Pipers.

Follow The Boys (Universal). The Hollywood Victory Committee entertains U.S. servicemen. George Raft, Dinah Shore, Sophie Tucker, Jeanette MacDonald, the Andrews Sisters, Orson Welles, W. C. Fields, Freddie Slack, the Delta Rhythm Boys.

Sensations of 1945 (United Artists). Eleanor Powell pulls promotional stunts to get her name into the papers. Cab Calloway, Woody Herman and his Band, the Les Paul Trio, W. C. Fields, Sophie Tucker, the Johnson Brothers.

**1945**

Hollywood Canteen (Warner Bros.). Robert Hutton wins a prize as the millionth guest at the place where the stars entertain the servicemen. The Andrews Sisters, Jack Benny, Joe E. Brown, Eddie Cantor, Roy Rogers, Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra, Carmen Cavallero.

**1946**

Ziegfeld Follies (MGM). Florenz Ziegfeld, played by William Powell, muses about doing just one more show. Fred Astaire, Virginia O'Brien, Keenan Wynn, Esther Williams, Fanny Brice, Lena Horne, Judy Garland, Gene Kelly.

Till The Clouds Roll By (MGM) A salute to Jerome Kern. Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Kathryn Grayson, Tony Martin, Lena Horne, Dinah Shore, June Allyson.

**1948**

Melody Time (RKO). A Disney pot-pourri mixing live action and animation. Roy Rogers, Dinning Sisters, Ethel Smith, the Andrews Sisters, Freddy Martin and his Orchestra.

Words and Music (MGM) Biopic of Rodgers and Hart, played by Mickey Rooney and Tom Drake respectively. Lena Horne, Judy Garland, Mel Torme, June Allyson, Gene Kelly, the Blackburn Twins, Vera-Ellen, Perry Como.

**1949**

Make Believe Ballroom (Columbia). Romance at a musical quiz show. Frankie Laine, Kay Starr, The Sportsmen, Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra, Jack Smith, Gene Krupa, the Nat 'King' Cole Trio.

Most of the above are rarely revived on television (although ironically 'Reveille with Beverly' did turn up on Channel 4 in September, 1996). If they are transmitted and videod by enthusiasts, I expect the fast forward button is well used as viewers skim to three minute performances by personal favourites. At the time, these films were comparatively cheap fare for studios to churn out in a decade when escapist seeking audiences were less discriminating than ever.

**Keith Parkinson**

# THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

**Keith resumes his detailed look at Bing's film career.**

**HARDWICKE, SIR CEDRIC** (1883-1964). Actor. He was Lord Pendragon in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1949). For many people the lasting cinematic memory of Hardwicke is when he strolls over a studio hill in the company of Bing and William Bendix as the trio sing 'We're Busy Doing Nothing'. At this stage of his career, Hardwicke was shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic on acting assignments and Yankee was sandwiched between the British productions The Winslow Boy and Now Barabbas. He made his name and reputation on the London stage and his 1934 knighthood was bestowed in recognition of his theatre and film work. He was first glimpsed on screen in a

British short in 1913 but it was twenty plus years on before his best work was being screened. He'd been enticed to Hollywood to appear in such as Les Miserables (1936) and The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939). He acted up until the time of his death leaving behind memorable performances in The Lodger (1944), Nicholas Nickleby (1947), Richard III (1955), The Ten Commandments (1956) and his last film The Pumpkin Eater (1964).

**HARDY, OLIVER** (1892-1957). Actor and half of the world's best loved film comedy partnership. Born Oliver Norvell Hardy Jr but known as Ollie by his on screen companion, Stan Laurel. He made his last film appearance in Riding High (1950). It was a walk-on part when he played a losing punter at the race track. He had completed his last film with Stan, the unfunny French-Italian co-production Atoll K and although the two planned a movie comeback in the mid-fifties Riding High was to be Hardy's last film. It came forty years after his first involvement with the cinema because it was in 1910 that he opened a small movie theatre. Four years later his patrons could watch him on the screen in his first acting assignment, Outwitting Dad. He first appeared with Laurel in 1917 in Lucky Dog but the real on-screen partnership didn't begin until 1926 with Duck Soup. There's little point in listing the team's films, titles have little relevance. You simply paid to see a Laurel and Hardy film. You knew what you were getting for your money. Their popularity dipped in the 1950s but the following decade saw a massive revival in popularity when the BBC began screening their best comedy shorts, made for Hal Roach until 1940. Video ensured their continued popularity. Have you ever found a video store without Laurel and Hardy on the shelves?

**HARMONY** Song. This Johnny Burke - James Van Heusen song was composed specially for a duet by Crosby and Bob Hope in a sequence featured in the all-star Variety Girl (1947). When the film was released in the UK, it was edited and the Crosby-Hope vocal cut, leaving the pair's comedy golfing sketch as their only contribution. Bing never made a studio recording of the song.

**HARRIS, PHIL** (1906-1995). Actor, musician and singer. Phil Harris was a close personal friend to Bing. He was in two Crosby movies of the 1950s Here Comes the Groom (1951) and Anything Goes (1956). In the first he makes a brief appearance alongside Louis Armstrong, Cass Daley, Dorothy Lamour and Frank Fontaine. That quintet join Bing in singing "Misto Cristofo Columbo" in a scene set on board a plane. His more substantial role as Steve Blair in the Anything Goes remake casts him as the father of Mitzi Gaynor. It's unfortunate that he had no vocal chores in that second film because his instantly likeable personality took on another dimension when he sang. In fact, it was his voice alone which Wait Disney hired for Phil's last three films. He provided voices for Baloo the bear in The Jungle Book (1967), J. Thomas O'Malley in The Aristocats (1970) and Little John in Robin Hood (1973). Career and personal highlights in his early days include:

**1931** Forming his own band, which made regular radio broadcasts
**1933** Making his film debut in Melody Cruise
**1940** Appearing as himself in Buck Benny Rides Again. His association with Jack Benny on radio lasted through the 1940s with Harris as musical director on "The Jack Benny Show".
**1941** Marrying Alice Faye

*Bing and Phil Harris en route to a hunting expedition.*

**HART, LORENZ** (1895-1943). Bing only sang four Hart compositions on screen but they were four gems. In The Big Broadcast (1932) he sang a snatch of "I've Got Five Dollars" but it was the 1935 film Mississippi which provided him with three songs that appear on most top ten lists of favourite renditions. These collaborations with partner Richard Rodgers were "It's Easy to Remember", "Down by the River" and "Soon". Hart's track record in a comparitively short life resulted in 29 musicals being written with Rodgers which played the Broadway and London theatres. Twelve of those were bought by Hollywood for film adaptation. His tragic life is documented in several biographies, the most objective being "Thou Swell, Thou Witty" by his sister-in-law, Dorothy Hart.

**HARTMAN, DON** (1900-1958). Screenwriter, director, producer and songwriter. It is Hartman's writing skills which provide the Bing association. He shares screenplay credit on Bing's three best loved Road films: Singapore (1940), Zanzibar (1941) and Morocco (1942). He shared screenplay credit with Walter DeLeon and Francis Martin. There is a further tenuous association with Bing on another couple of films to which Hartman contributed. These are the Bob Hope comedies My Favourite Blonde (1942) and The Princess and the Pirate (1944) in which Bing made brief appearances. Before entering films in 1930, Hartman had been an actor, songwriter and supplier of material for radio shows. He

was put in charge of production at Paramount in 1951 and established his own production company in 1956.

**HAYDN, RICHARD** (1905-1985). Actor and director. You only needed to see one Richard Haydn performance to eagerly await his next film. He was always in supporting parts when he appeared in front of the camera. His onscreen work with Bing was as Emperor Franz Josef in The Emperor Waltz (1948). He then directed Crosby in Mr Music (1950). Paramount originally selected him to direct Bing in Here Comes the Groom the following year but that task was eventually carried out by Frank Capra and Mr Music turned out to be his last directorial assignment. His last appearance was in the 1974 comedy Young Frankenstein.

**HAYTON, LENNIE** (1908-1971). Pianist, bandleader, arranger, composer and musical director. Hayton's Crosby connection is in his capacity as M.D. on the 1933 picture Going Hollywood, as far as films are concerned. The general musical relationship goes somewhat deeper. He worked alongside Bing in the Paul Whiteman Orchestra between 1928 and 1930. The two made appearances in King of Jazz (1930) and Hayton also worked with Bing during the latter's early days on radio. Hayton was appointed musical director for M-G-M in 1940. It was a post he was to hold until 1953 and resulted on his working on some of the best musicals to come out of Hollywood. These included On the Town (1949) - for which he won an Oscar - and Singin' in the Rain (1952). He was considered a major talent in films up until the time of his death with two later triumphs being Star (1968) and Hello Dolly (1969). He married Lena Horne in 1947.

**HEAD, EDITH** (1907-1981). Costume designer and possibly the best known backroom talent in Hollywood. She was involved with almost every major Paramount movie during Bing's tenure with that studio. She even defected to RKO to make The Bells of St. Mary's (1945) at a time when studios were not known to loan their prime production talent. She worked on all the Paramount Road pictures but her first assigned Bing pic was Rhythm on the Range (1936). She was costume designer on the following Crosby starrers: Waikiki Wedding (1937), Paris Honeymoon (1939), The Star Maker (1939), Birth of the Blues (1941), Holiday Inn (1942), Going My Way (1944), Here Come the Waves (1944), Blue Skies (1946), Welcome Stranger (1947), The Emperor Waltz (1948), Riding High (1950), Here Comes the Groom (1951), Just for You (1952), Little Boy Lost (1953), White Christmas (1954), The Country Girl (1954) and Anything Goes (1956). In addition she worked on some films on which Bing had peripheral involvement: Star Spangled Rhythm (1942), My Favourite Brunette (1947), The Greatest Show on Earth (1952), Son of Paleface (1952) and Scared Stiff (1953). She began freelancing at about the time Bing also left Paramount and they were both involved at Columbia with Pepe (1960). In 1967 she again found a permanent studio employer with Universal and her talents were used on such as Hitchcock's Family Plot (1976) and Airport 77 (1977). In her forty plus years in the world's film capital she won eight Academy Awards for costume design.

**HEADLESS HORSEMAN** Song from Ichabod and Mr. Toad (1949). Like the other songs from this Disney full length cartoon which Bing performed on the soundtrack, the writers were Don Raye and Gene de Paul.

**HEART OF SHOW BUSINESS, THE** Promotional film for Variety Clubs International. The facilities of Columbia studio were donated for this 40 minute fund raiser. Participants contributed their services free of charge and Bing was one of five narrators together with Cecil B. DeMille, Burt Lancaster, Edward G. Robinson and James Stewart. Director Ralph Straub used the onscreen talents of Harry Belafonte, Victor Borge, Maurice Chevalier, Jimmy Durante, Sophie Tucker, etc. The film was not shown in the U.K.

**HEATWAVE** Song. Written by Irving Berlin, it turned up in two Bing films: Blue Skies (1946) and White Christmas (1954). It was sung in the former by Olga San Juan but Bing took a crack at it the latter when it was performed as a duet with Danny Kaye.

**HEFLIN, VAN** (1910-1971). Actor. He appeared with Bing when both were nearing the end of their film careers, although Heflin was unaware of the heart condition which would end his life whilst he was still at his acting peak. The film they did together was the remake of Stagecoach (1966). Heflin played Curly Wilcox, the character out to capture the Ringo Kid and collect the reward. Heflin's showbusiness career began on the Broadway stage when he was eighteen. He entered films in 1936 due to the efforts of Katherine Hepburn who wanted him to appear with her in A Woman Rebels. If I had to select a film for each decade to illustrate Heflin's craft my choice would be The Three Musketeers (1948), Shane (1953), The Greatest Story Ever Told (1965) and Airport 70 (1970). That last film was Heflin's swansong. He died of a heart attack whilst swimming. On screen he always gave the impression of taking the art of acting seriously.

**HEISLER, STUART** (1894-1979). Heisler was an editor who progressed to director. It was in the first category that he worked on We're Not Dressing (1934). His next brush with Bing on the big screen was also his most prestigious work for Hollywood: director on Blue Skies (1946). He was a part of the movie capital since its birth. He began as a prop man in 1913 and moved up through the ranks. Blue Skies was not typical Heisler, being sandwiched between The Glass Key (1942) and Tokyo Joe (1949). He was never lauded by the critics, probably because he was most at home making action films. Fifties journeyman assignments like Beachhead (1954) and The Burning Hills (1956) are typical. He moved into television work in the 1960s, where he no doubt felt comfortable in meeting the less stringent requirements of that medium.

**HENDERSON, RAY** (1896-1970). Composer. Born Raymond Brost, Henderson was one third of the

song writing team of DeSylva, Brown and Henderson. The only Henderson composition Bing sang for a film was "Birth of the Blues", featured in the 1941 Paramount picture of the same title. The peak years of the songwriting trio were over by then. Their hey-day occured around the time of their hit shows "Sunny Side Up" in 1929 and "Good News" the following year. There was a film biography of the partnership in 1956 called The Best Things in Life are Free in which Henderson was portrayed by Dan Dailey.

**HENDRIX, WANDA** (1928-1981). Actress born with the made-for-showbiz name of Dixie Wanda Hendrix. She was fourth billed as Emily Walters in the Bing picture Welcome Stranger (1947) although she did not have a plot significant role as the daughter of the drunken editor of the town newspaper. That same year she was "herself' in Paramount's talent showcase Variety Girl. These early film appearances showed an early promise that was not fulfilled. She accepted routine parts in such as Song of Surrender (1949), Montana Territory (1952) and The Black Dakotas (1954). She attempted an unsuccessful comeback in Stage to Thunder Rock (1964). She was married to Audie Murphy in 1949 for a scant year. He was the first of three husbands.

## ONCE IN A WHILE

**This is the 'obituaries' section and sadly we have to say farewell to several contributors to the Crosby scene.**

**Marjorie Reynolds** died in February with some reports saying she was 75 and others 80 years of age. Born Marjorie Goodspeed, she made her film debut as a small child in silent films and went on to appear in about thirty 'B' pictures in the 1930s under the name of Marjorie Moore. In late 1941, at very short notice, she was selected for a lead role in 'Holiday Inn' when first Mary Martin and then Rita Hayworth had to drop out. None of Paramount's top female stars had the dancing ability to partner Fred Astaire adequately and it was Marjorie's talent in that area which got her the job. As a result she appeared in one of the most frequently used 'clips' from a film - the scene when Bing sings 'White Christmas' to her. Marjorie's singing in the film was dubbed by Martha Mears. Marjorie went on to appear in 'Star Spangled Rhythm' (1942), 'Dixie' (1943) and 'Duffy's Tavern' (1945) with Bing. Her career probably peaked in 1944 when she starred with Ray Milland in 'Ministry of Fear'. She moved into television in the 1950s appearing in 'The Life of Riley' with William Bendix from 1952 to 1958. Married twice, Jack Reynolds (1936-45) and John Haffen (1946 until his death in 1985), Marjorie had one daughter from her first marriage.

*Marjorie listens to Bing's plea about his heart.*

**Irving Caesar** - the composer, died in December, aged 101, in New York. He wrote the lyrics for many famous songs including 'Swanee' (with George Gershwin), 'Tea for Two' (with Vincent Youmans), 'Crazy Rhythm', and 'Sometimes I'm Happy'. Bing sang several of his songs and indeed enjoyed some success with a German song to which Irving Caesar put English words and which became 'Just a Gigolo'.

**Lew Ayres** passed away in December at the age of 88. He is perhaps best remembered as 'Dr. Kildare' in the series of films made by MGM from 1938 to 1942. He had earlier starred in the classic 'All Quiet on the Western Front' (1930) which remains a great pacifist work. Ayres himself was a conscientious objector in World War II and he was dropped from his Dr. Kildare role in 1942 because of this. His career recovered after the war after he had returned to the screen in 'Dark Mirror' (1946). He was nominated for an Oscar as best actor for his role in 'Johnny Belinda' (1948) but lost out to Laurence Olivier. Ayres was married to Ginger Rogers from 1934 to 1941. His involvement with Bing started in August, 1932 when they shared a fishing trip on the M.V. Kamika along the Mexican coast. He also appeared on Bing's Kraft Music Hall show on February 6, 1941. Another small link was on July 4, 1941 when Bing sang at the wedding of his friend Ken Murray, which was held at Lew Ayres' home.

**Burton Lane** died on January 6th. at the age of 84. Originally a high school dropout he went on to become one of the most respected composers in the popular music field writing the music for shows such as 'Finian's Rainbow' and 'On a Clear Day You Can See Forever'. Some of the classic songs he composed were 'How About You', 'Old Devil Moon', 'How Are Things in Glocca

Morra' and 'Everything I Have Is Yours' all of which were sung by Bing.

**Tiny Tim** died in December after falling ill as he performed his signature tune 'Tiptoe Through the Tulips'. Born Herbert Khaury, he was probably aged 66 and he had built his career on his falsetto voice and an effeminate and almost childish stage manner. It is hard to imagine he and Bing having anything in common but when Bing hosted the Hollywood Palace show on 4th. January, 1969, he and Tiny Tim sang a medley together of Bing's old hits. Tiny Tim professed to be a real expert on Bing's songs and although this could simply have been scripted, I had the feeling that there was some truth in it by the way Tiny Tim spoke. One obituary said "he grew up listening to his parents' 78-rpm records and fell under the sway of Bing Crosby and other crooners...." which perhaps tends to confirm how he was influenced by Bing.

## BOOKS 'N' BING

Several new books and magazines featuring Bing have been seen since the last issue.

### Gord Atkinson's Showbill

Members will remember that we reprinted an article by Gord Atkinson in BING 113. Gord is a prominent Canadian broadcaster and columnist who regularly interviewed show business stars on his show. He was, of course, also responsible for the award winning series 'The Crosby Years' which will be familiar to many readers and he was a main speaker at the official ceremony unveiling Bing's statue at Gonzaga in 1981. After a brief biographical section in which Gord describes how he came to follow his chosen career, the book is devoted to chapters on the various stars he met and in all 36 celebrities are reviewed. Bing is prominent throughout the book with not only Gord's story of how he met Bing being recounted but also there is a nine page chapter on Mr. Crosby as well which starts as follows:

*"Bing Crosby was the most popular entertainer of his time and had perhaps a greater impact on show business than any other performer of the 20th. century."*

We can't argue with that! Gord met Bing on many occasions and it is fascinating to read about some of these meetings, especially the time when Bing gave Gord and his wife a special performance of 'At My Time of Life'. The book runs through the generations from Fred Astaire, Bob Hope, Perry Como and Frank Sinatra to Paul Anka, Bill Cosby and Elvis Presley. Comments made by Bing about other stars crop up in the chapters on them and really Bing's influence is felt throughout. Well illustrated with photographs, including several with Bing, this very attractive book has 208 pages and is published by Creative Bound Inc. Further details can be found in 'Trading Post'.

### The Songs of Bing Crosby on Compact Disc

We have mentioned this book by Jim Reilly in previous editions but now that the book is in our hands, it is appropriate to review this colossal piece of work. The first Bing CD was issued in the USA in 1986 and as we all know, the growth of the CD since then has been incredible. The number of songs by Bing on CD now exceed 1300 and it is a good job that Jim has drawn a line now and listed what has been issued. If it had been left much longer, the work needed to produce a comprehensive listing would have been beyond the powers of us all. The book is A5 size with a nice light blue glossy cover bearing an illustration of Bing by Graeme J. Puckett. Professionally printed and presented, the book has three main sections. The first lists all known Bing album titles together with those albums where Bing makes guest appearances. Section Two alphabetically lists each song sung by Bing that has appeared on compact disc and gives the title of every known CD on which it appears. The final section lists each CD featuring Bing and gives the contents as well. Jim realises that his publication will be rapidly overtaken as new CDs are issued and he intends to issue a supplement periodically. This is an important contribution to Crosbyana and we thank Jim for the enormous amount of work he has put into this project. The book can be obtained direct from Jim Reilly (see inside cover for address) or from Michael Crampton, price £10 including postage.

### Jazz Greats

This is a fortnightly publication by Marshall Cavendish which also includes a CD or cassette. The edition numbered 19 and subtitled 'Jazz Voices - The Men' has Bing on the front cover and a full page article describing how Bing's singing was influenced by the jazz musicians he worked with in his formative years. The magazine costs £3.99 and with it you get a CD or cassette linked to the content of the magazine.

On the CD issued with magazine number 19 are two Bing tracks which are described as follows:

*My Honey's Lovin' Arms (Ruby / Meyer) (26/1/33 NYC) There is almost too much of a good thing here: Bing plus the Dorsey Brothers, plus Bunny Berigan, plus the Mills Brothers. There are virtually two bands, because the four voices and guitar of the Mills Brothers make an orchestra all by themselves. The accompaniment switches seamlessly from one to the other, a difficult trick in itself, and the freewheeling chorus by the band epitomises the uncomplicated high spirits of early-Thirties jazz.*

*'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So (Robison) (10/6/28 NYC) This shows Bing at his most jaunty, in a song written by the folksiest of American composers, Willard Robison. This track is particularly interesting because it also features Bix Beiderbecke's cornet, muted at first and then open. The similarity between Bing and Bix in terms of rhythm and phrasing is very clear at this early date. Towards the end of the track there is a bassoon solo which is so appallingly played that it is actually quite fun.*

Details of the CD are also given in Jim Reilly's 'Keeping Track'.

**Malcolm Macfarlane**

# One Sweet Letter From You

**Members' views, and opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue.**

**John Martin,** Oaklands, Hall Walks, Easington Village, Co. Durham SR8 3BS

A resounding 'YES' to your sensible decision to allow debate in our magazine. I am, admittedly, a "born again" Crosby fan, having regrettably deserted Bing in the 50s, only to be thankfully brought back into the Crosby fold by the sadly missed John Joyce some 13 years ago. I pose as no expert on Bing but is obvious to me that we need all our members, regardless of whether they like all or part of his material. Membership of the ICC has introduced me to a Bing I never knew existed in my few years as a very young Crosby fan. I now make up for lost time listening to his records from every era of his career. Some of his efforts I consider to be detrimental to his reputation and in this respect I agree with Clive Menadue, who I greatly admire for his role in creating a bit of controversy. Bing would have loved it and would no doubt have written back in the self deprecating manner of his "long gone" letter to Cyril Stapleton some 40 years ago.

I personally make no specific criticisms of Bing's records and films but I am proud to be a selective Crosby fan - a great admirer and certainly no "lesser mortal."

**Stan White,** 57 Stanley Street, Rothwell, Kettering, Northants NN14 6EA

Don't change the name of the club, we had all of this years ago, and it causes a lot of conflict. The magazine does not use a fan club format, please keep it that way. The letters pages should always be open to the differing views of members.

Frank Brannigan brings up the subject of Bing's record sales. It is a fact that since the 78 rpm days, a lot of Bing's songs have been re-issued many times on LP and CD with many songs now in the million seller bracket through album sales. 'White Christmas' is probably in the 130 million range, some say even more, and with the 1942 version out of recording copyright and now available to any label, and with the 1947 version soon to drop from copyright, only the count through the copyright in the music can provide sales figures. Whether the Irving Berlin office is willing to release such information is another matter, assuming they still do keep count!

So the Cavalry comes to the rescue of Clive Menadue in the form of David Lobosco, and the nit-picking is alive and well, with Buddy Cole the target this time. My goodness, the millions of listeners to the weekly BBC programme 'The Organist Entertains' would be shocked at the narrow portrait David paints of Buddy's musical ability. Certainly in the UK, Buddy is considered to be one of the few outstanding exponents of the pipe organ, and to some extent the electronic, regardless of the views of Buddy's organ work by such as Ken Barnes, who tends to dismiss it as less worthwhile than other forms of accompaniment, rather like Fred Reynolds looks down on the pipe organ accompaniment given to Bing on record by Eddie Dunstedter, a flawed assertion in my opinion.

I digress, like Buddy Cole and his trio or not, they all worked with John Scott Trotter's Band, which was really Bing's band headed by Trotter. Bing paid the wages and by 1953 Bing knew he could not justify keeping the band, and in 1954 Trotter retired. The radio and recording people were no longer willing to pay for the use of the band, so, Bing phoned Buddy and the rest is well documented in a previous issue of this magazine. From time to time Buddy was able to give Bing a full backing from a studio assembled orchestra, often many of Trotter's old players, when a contract included money to cover that, and Buddy did it well. When Ken Barnes added the Pete Moore Orchestra to those Buddy Cole tracks, he illustrated what Buddy could have done, given the money, or perhaps we should say, what Bing could have done, because he paid Buddy and the group. On the business side, what worked for Ken Barnes, could not

have worked for Bing and Buddy. They tried but the recording and radio people were not buying. Decca did the odd album such as 'Songs I Wish I Had Sung' with some prodding from Buddy, but it was not until Bing had left Decca that some band backed albums came along.

Trotter gave Bing some wonderful arrangements on record and radio but as a change it was nice to hear Bing with the smaller Buddy Cole accompaniment, which allowed his voice to be heard to full advantage and he sounded great. At a much earlier point in Bing's career, he recorded 'Sweet Sue, Just You', just with Lennie Hayton on piano (which is on the recent Jonzo CD) and that was not released for many years because they thought Bing needed more accompaniment. Strange, because Bing sounds very much on top of what he is doing, with Lennie throwing in some good improvised playing.

Bing sounded wonderful for most of his career, whether with no backing, a small backing, a band backing or a full orchestral backing, and even late in his career, there is a lot to be said in his favour. By his 70s, Bing's voice was sounding tired, but given the arrangements and backing of the Pete Moore Orchestra for the Ken Barnes projects, and Alan Cohen for Decca (UK), his voice did take on new life. Also some of the songs which Bing recorded under his own steam with pianist-arranger Paul Smith, came across quite well. It is true that on the Spanish album with Smith, Bing did struggle with some of the songs, but allow for his age, and there is little to say. If he was content to record, then fair enough.

Clive, for goodness sake, the majority of people who enjoy Bing never had the chance to meet him. That does not make you and them lesser people than those who did meet him. Indeed, I would say that with the publication of your feature 'The Magnificent Seven and Me' you have now reached the higher ranks of the Crosby chroniclers rubbing shoulders with such as Lionel Pairpoint, Fred Reynolds, Bert Bishop, Keith Parkinson, Jim Reilly, Les Gaylor etc. What more can you ask!
*(Editor: Thanks, Stan. Another who does not want the name of the Club changed is Edwin Garcia who writes from the USA in similar vein.)*

**Edwin Garcia,** 225 East 106 St., Apt 7F, New York, NY 10029-7614

I would like to register my vote for retaining the name of our club, International Crosby Circle. The appellation "The Crosby Society" has a stuffy, academic ring, which reminds me of some of the less frequented dusty, dimly-lit museums we have here in New York. The word "circle" distinguishes our club from others that use the word "society." Also the word "international" serves to distinguish Bing's universal fame and is a reminder that Bing was the first truly international pop superstar.

Finally, I thank you for your continuing work in preserving the Crosby legacy.

**Stan Willcox,** 21 The Littleway, Leicester LE5 4PN

I was very interested in the letter from Robert C. Achorn in BING 114 referring to the many songs that mention Bing's name in their lyrics. I feel that the Club's members should be reminded of the detailed survey carried out by the late Dick Nettleton many years back when he came up with the astonishing total of over 100 such songs. The incredible thing is that more songs are still cropping up and the final figure would be extraordinary. I understand that Colin Pugh salvaged Dick's efforts and has since added many more. Stan Austin is another member who helped Dick in his search for 'Bing in Lyric'.

Now I would like to comment on a couple of points raised in your most interesting editorial. Should members be free to debate Bing's work? Yes, definitely, unless the aim is to produce a magazine dedicated to sycophancy. I first discovered Bing in 1934 and he will always be No. 1 with me. However with over 50 years in show business, it is impossible for him to have been on top form all of that time. I enjoy the performances of many other artistes but always end up listening to the voice, phrasing, rhythm and humour of Bing Crosby.

As for the suggestion that our club should be renamed 'The Crosby Society' - perish the thought. We are international, a read through any issue of BING proves that. Bing is famous and popular all over the world, so let us remain what we are -'International'.

**Mr. V. Early,** 16 Vale Crescent, Kingston Vale, London SW15 3PN

I feel I would like to put my opinion to you in respect of changing the name of this marvellous Crosby club. I have been a devoted Bing fan for 64 years, ever since I bought a 78 single of Bing singing 'Brother, Can You Spare a Dime' . I have always considered myself as the No. 1 Bing fan in the world, but since joining the Circle, I have changed that view slightly. When describing my love of listening to Bing singing, I say that there are probably many people who appreciate Bing as <u>much</u> as I do, but no one appreciates his singing <u>more</u> than I do. We are the lucky ones, that we are able to appreciate that marvellous voice so well. If the name of the club has to change, then I suggest 'The Bing Crosby Appreciation Society'.

**Margaret Otway,** 14 Barnsley Avenue, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3LB

....Can I just say that if you are counting votes I for one would like the name of the ICC to remain unchanged. The word 'International' is I'm sure the key word, it has a ring to it, it suggests open arms that welcome anyone from anywhere, one big happy family. The word 'Society' sounds a bit stuffy, a bit selective if not snobbish but of course these are only my opinions and obviously I would conform to the wishes of the majority but I would be saddened by the change.
*(Editor: We received several other letters as well on this subject and most members wished to leave things as they are. To be honest, there were no plans for a name*

*change but after a few comments from members, we thought we would air the issue. As mentioned in my editorial, we shall continue to be the International Crosby Circle until the members decree otherwise.)*

**Arnold Pope,** 9 Hawkstone Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester M45 7PG

Congratulations and thanks to you and the team for another splendid issue of BING, packed full of interest.

With regard to Frank Brannigan's letter, I think your comments at the end of it probably sum up accurately the question of Bing's record sales generally, and particularly 'Silent Night' and 'White Christmas' after all the years that have passed. I also agree with Frank that sales of 'Silent Night' are probably at least equal with 'White Christmas' especially as the former song was recorded in 1935 giving it a start of seven Christmases!

Regarding Frank's statement that 'White Christmas' did not gain real popularity until the late 1940s, as a 15 year old I remember it being played countless times on radio and in every emporium you went into and in fact, repeatedly, in any place recorded music was played. Further to this, Orson Welles, on the Philco Radio Hall of Fame show in December 1944, said to Bing "your recording has already sold two million copies" which was a massive number in those days.

The 1947 recordings of the two numbers were never in my view quite as good as those from 1942, and this is hard for me to put into words, but they never sounded as 'atmospheric' or as 'satisfying' to me. It was disappointing that Bing ducked the high note on 'peace' in the second chorus of 'Silent Night' and would it not have been a better record if a second verse had been used instead of a repeat of the first chorus? This matter of the words applies also to the 1942 version of course.

**Paul Barnes,** 7 Park Lane, Norwich NR2 3EE.

Listeners to the radio programmes over which I preside are treated now and then to tales of my airborne exploits. The aeroplanes which I fly are leased, but for some time now I have been considering buying one. GOLF - BRAVO INDIA NOVEMBER GOLF (see photograph) came onto the market. With such a registration it was irresistible. Alas I was too late and it went to a man in Northern Ireland. Thus I was deprived of the chance to enact the following dialogue.

Air Traffic Control: "Golf - Bravo India November Golf; report present altitude and position."

Me: "Two thousand, five hundred. Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day...."

*(Editor: It's good to hear from Barnesy and can I say a heartfelt thank you to Paul for his prodigious efforts in promoting Bing.)*

**John Stiles,** Newlands, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2SX

Thank you for another excellent BING (no. 114). I usually re-read the magazine as I find that it helps the memory for retention and it is often enjoyable to read the majority of the articles and news again. 'Bing on the Box' is most informative but I believe Bert Bishop was relying on his memory when referring on page 39 to 'Moonlight and Shadows'. This was sung by Dorothy Lamour in her first picture 'The Jungle Princess' (1936).

I have obtained a copy of the Howard Crosby interview with John Marshall. I was highly impressed. To me, it provided riveting entertainment. My wife, Betty, is not a Bing enthusiast but she also watched with considerable interest.

I believe that John conducted a subtle Michael Parkinson-type interview. This enabled Howard to relate to us stories he has doubtless told before but the underlying theme was his sincerity. A man of integrity, he spoke with pride on the various branches of the Crosby family with only a brief precis, I believe deliberately, on Bing's first four sons. What came over was his respect and I believe admiration for 'Uncle Bing'. I sense therefore that any attempt to probe his uncle's character would have received short thrift. Less would have been achieved and an 'early door' might have been shown to John.

The grouping of Kate and Harry's family into two categories, the outgoing and introverted helps to explain why Bing has suffered in later years from disparaging remarks: 'mean, a loner etc.', quite unfairly and they can generally be disregarded. In his earlier days, Bing undoubtedly had a more outward going character but the war and other factors changed him as time went by. As Bing grew older, he may well have needed to put on the outward-going character with whom we are familiar. It is easy to see how the introverted part of his character developed as time passed by. As he became more famous

and influential, it must have been difficult to differentiate between friends and hangers-on, idolizers or those with 'an angle'. There must have been many in the last category and he could have suffered some painful experiences which would have caused him to be cautious when approached.

The early letters to Spokane confirm how much Bing looked up to his mother. She set standards and this had a major character influence on him throughout his life. He attempted to impose these standards on his first four sons. It was only natural that they should rebel and with probably irregular support from Dixie and it seems an indulgent housekeeper who spoilt them, it was not surprising that things went wrong. Also it was not altogether unexpected that when he was absent, they did not live up to his ideals and were duly chastised and physically punished, just as, no doubt, Bing was punished in his youth.

I have diverged from the subject of John's video but this does have some relevance as I do not imagine that Howard would wish to divulge any previously unknown 'tit-bits' - if there should be any. 'The Hollow Man' and Gary's biography probably dredged up 99.9% of the private side of Bing and then in a slanted manner. 'The Hollow Man' includes much interesting information but it was designed to denigrate and smear the character of a man who for nearly seventy years has provided world-wide pleasure to millions. As for Gary, a recording artist at sixteen! He wasted the better part of his life despite being given such a start in life by his father. I wonder whether in his later years he appreciated what his father had attempted to do for him and his three brothers.

I am sorry to have written such a missive - I hope it is not over the top! My main reason for writing is to give the highest praise to John Marshall and say how pleased I am with his achievement. The result is a most absorbing video.
*(Editor: John Marshall's video remains available for £5 including postage from him at 39 Kings Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD. The comments about Bing being an introvert from the other John - Stiles this time - strike a chord with me and I think that he is pretty near the mark. In 'Gifts Differing' by Isabel Briggs Myers with Peter Myers, some comments are made about the difference between extroverts and introverts as follows:*
*1. Extroverts tend to work out what they think as they talk and maybe change their minds later. Introverts prefer more quiet time to think and work things out internally. They like to establish the underlying logic to the subject matter before they're ready to contribute.*
*2. Extroverts tend to be willing to plunge into activity before reflection. Introverts tend to want to understand things before they act.*
*3. Extroverts tend to unload their emotions as they go along. Introverts are likely to bottle up their feelings.*
*Based on these comments. Bing was certainly an introvert in his later years. Perhaps we all change as we get older. Any psychologists out there who care to contribute?)*

**Mr G J Delasalle,** 41, Avondale Road, Finchley, London N3 2EU

As new members of the International Crosby Circle, we discovered its existence via the Sinatra Music Society. We look forward to receiving our regular copies of BING. My wife and I thought the following story may be of interest to you and your readers.

Ever since I have been interested in popular music, I have been a great fan of Bing Crosby. As a boy, young man, adult, I have been a collector of his EP's, LP's, cassettes and videos. When courting the young lady who is now my wife of 35 years, I was delighted to learn she was also a fan of Bing. To actually meet him would be an impossible dream; however our chance came when he and Bob Hope came to England to make 'The Road to Hong Kong' at Pinewood Studios in 1962.

An article in the London Evening Standard stated they and their families were sharing a house near Wentworth Golf Course in Surrey, and after discreet enquiries I found the exact address. We did not own a car at the time. As newly weds we were saving hard for our own house - a car would come later. On a summer afternoon I borrowed a friend's van and drove to the house, which has since been owned by Rod Stewart and now I believe is owned by Elton John. On arriving at the mansion, I rang the bell. A butler appeared and asked who we were and what we wanted. I replied we were life-long fans of Bing and if he was at home, would it be possible to meet him?

He went into the house and a few moments later, Bing appeared on the doorstep. We could hardly believe our luck. He was his usual cool, calm self, chatting freely to us for what seemed ages. He even suggested we should have brought a camera with us and taken some snaps. He saw the van parked in the drive and asked how far we had travelled to see him. I enquired about Bob Hope and Bing said he was out playing golf. Bing was a real gentleman, shaking our hands and thanking us for taking the trouble to visit him. I was cursing myself on the way home for not taking my camera with me. It is our one regret of that very memorable afternoon.

We saw Bing on both his appearances at the London Palladium. The last time was a week before he died in October 1977. In August 1995, we visited Bing's home and the Crosby Student Centre at Gonzaga University where he studied, in Spokane, Washington State USA.
*(Editor: What a nice story. Can you imagine driving up to the home of a world famous celebrity in a van and asking to see him! Only Bing would have come out to have a chat. Amazing! We welcome Mr and Mrs Delasalle to the ICC.)*

**Michael Collins,** P.O. Box 2030, Flagler Beach, FL 32136, USA

It might, on the face of it, appear to be a peculiar exercise in futility, but I must confess that one of the first things I always turn to upon opening the latest edition of BING is Bert Bishop's radio review. After all, I live thousands of

miles away and one may wonder why I should conceivably be interested in what is happening out in Cambridgeshire, or up in the Wirral. I can, of course, offer a few reasons, but setting these aside, I also think it has something to do with the fact that, even though he has undoubtedly excelled in other areas, radio when you come down to it always has been and still remains Bing's natural medium. I am glad to see that it is alive and well and even flourishing in the UK.

Mr. Bishop's cleverly captioned 'Not the Best of Bing' award should serve as a timely reminder to radio and record producers alike of how much Crosby material is currently available on compact disc. It is hard to tell why disc jockeys confine themselves to such a limited repertoire of recordings. Is it due to lack of resources or simply lack of imagination? I tend to suspect the latter, though it may also have to do with giving the public what it wants. Rosemary Clooney recently bemoaned the fact that those records of which she is most ashamed are precisely the ones which are most frequently requested.

It must also be said, if it any consolation, that there is little evidence that other singers fare any better than Bing does and that may well be the reason why. Last year, here in the U.S. National Public Radio rebroadcast an award winning series on the Great American Composers of the Popular Song. The series began with a programme on Rodgers and Hart. In among the Broadway recordings was a version of 'Blue Room' exquisitely sung by Perry Como, who also included the seldom heard verse. I couldn't help wondering, on hearing him sing, if casual listeners across the nation's heartlands were under the impression that Como only ever recorded two songs - 'It's Impossible' and 'Catch a Falling Star'. The same programme also featured a fine rendition by Tony Bennett of one of Rodgers and Hart's lesser known numbers. Again the thought occurred to me, for one such performance how many thousand repetitions do we have to endure of 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco'?

If the record stores nowadays are conspicuously empty when it comes to representing the work of the great song stylists, it is equally clear that Frank Sinatra is an honourable exception. Virtually everything he ever recorded is readily available down to the early air-checks and V-discs. Yet, just by listening to the radio one would hardly have guessed it. The same familiar chestnuts keep recurring, including the dreaded 'My Way'. The pool from which the average disc jockey draws his material is surprisingly small. This varies little, I find, from one country to the next, though here we must exclude those specialist BBC programmes whose illustrious presenters are frequently referred to in these pages. They are far from typical, I fear.

The irrepressible Groucho Marx once observed, regarding the allegedly rejuvenating properties of molasses (then fashionable), that taking it did not actually make you live longer, it just seemed longer. By the same token, certain records seem to have been played at intervals of fifteen minutes for the past quarter of a century. Each reader will have his, or her, own favourite. Were I a betting man, my money would go on Jule Styne's 'People' and, to beat it by a short head, 'The Green, Green Grass of Home'. Perhaps, it's time to call for a general amnesty. If I may borrow the words of the late Kingsley Amis from a very different context, I would suggest that these songs ought to be "actively discouraged for an experimental millennium or so." That should keep us all happy.

**Roy Irvine,** 39 Galwally Avenue, Belfast BT8 4AJ

...I have the privilege of being a guest on local BBC Radio Ulster on a weekly programme devoted to 'older' listeners. I bring along and discuss popular records from my own collection. This is usually music of the 30s, 40s and 50s and I include Bing as often as I can - without overdoing it. This lasts for half-an-hour at the end of presenter Walter Love's 'Love Forty' programme. My inclusion is every other week. It is enjoyable and listeners often say how much they appreciate being reminded of the famous songs and instrumentals of those past times. I should say that I have a very large collection of LPs - and quite a few CDs - and I prefer to use my own records rather than borrow from the BBC. There is no previous discussion in advance with Walter. He trusts me to come along to chat about records while he puts them out 'on air'....
*(Editor: Roy is obviously another person who does so much to promote Bing and long may he keep up the good work. I guess Roy must be fairly professional as well in view of the way that the presenter lets him do his own thing.)*

**Gary Giddins,** 145 East 15th. Street, Apartment 7U, New York, NY 10003, USA

This is primarily a fan letter. Congratulations on another superb issue (No. 114); I'm always amazed at the professional quality you (and, for that matter, the BINGANG editors) achieve on what I assume is a Lilliputian budget. Of course, I especially liked your travel piece, which brought home memories of my trip - though to my regret I didn't get to San Simeon.

As a grateful reader of the magazine, I have a few comments. First, in answer to your editorial query, I vote for controversy. It's more fun to read and it makes you think. My guess is the only result of the brouhaha about the 'Autobiography' is that it encouraged people to listen to it again, and what's wrong with that? I am amused that a few correspondents seemed to feel that Bing's narrative comments were spontaneous. He recorded the narration during a couple of afternoons in Palm Springs some time after the musical selections were completed, and he read from a script written by Louis Untermeyer - word for word. His naturalness in carrying out the assignment indicates his gifts as an actor, but I wonder why he was so blase regarding facts, like saying 'Wrap Your Troubles' (and not 'I Surrender Dear') got him his CBS job, or, concerning 'Ghost of a Chance', "The lyrics I believe are by Ned Washington," as if he didn't know! Personally, I think 'A Musical Autobiography' is delightful. I could do without the organ behind his speaking, but Buddy Cole's accompaniment to the singing is remarkably deft, and

Bing is in excellent form - I wish he had sung more than a chorus on some of the early numbers. 'Muddy Water' for example, is far better than the original. At the time he agreed to the project, Bing was feeling somewhat unwanted by the public, and he refused several other suggestions for recordings offered by producer Milt Gabler. The reason Louis Armstrong re-recorded all his classics for the other Decca autobiography is that Decca didn't own the originals, and as there was talk of a movie, the company wanted to be able to secure the soundtrack. With Bing, there was no reason to re-record the Deccas; all things considered, I think he put a good deal of himself into the project - and it's worth remembering 40 years on that no one else ever did anything remotely as ambitious.

One other point triggered by Clive Menadue: "some genius," he writes, "chose Joan Collins for 'The Road to Hong Kong'." I don't know who suggested her originally, but the geniuses who approved her were Bing and Bob, who were responsible for nixing Lamour. No one's perfect, and it seems rather silly to blame some unknown for decisions made by a great star who had more control over his career than most. Bing signed off on almost every leading lady he worked with, beginning with Mary Carlisle; on a few films, including 'Blue Skies' and 'High Time', the leading lady was replaced at his insistence.

Incidentally, I am still unable to find an uncut version of 'If I Had My Way' though Universal says that it has a pristine negative. Maybe if they are besieged by fans, they will put the thing out, along with the other Bing Universals. The missing 14 minutes consist of acts by legendary vaudeville stars, and getting them on film was the key reason Bing and David Butler wanted to make the picture in the first place.

Keep up the good work. I'm still plugging away, and never fail to learn much from the magazine.
*(Editor: The more I hear from Gary, the more that I get excited at the prospect of his forthcoming book. Surely no-one has ever researched Bing's career so thoroughly.)*

**John Bignell,** 21 St. Andrews Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2QB

.....The Calendar duly arrived and I was again impressed by the coloured photographs of so many well known and loved Crosby songs of the early years in particular. I have one query. Does anyone have any knowledge of the song illustrated for September? 'Your Love' is the mystery item in question. I have scanned all the discographies for Cremo, Music That Satisfies, Kraft Music Hall, Philco, Chesterfield and have drawn a blank. I went to Rust/Forbes massive 'Dance Bands on Record' and still no luck. I consulted my own card index system (over 12,000 titles of what I have on record or CD) and I've now had to give up. The song sheet, obviously genuine, says "successfully introduced by Bing Crosby" - but where or when? Lyrics by Ned Washington and music by Walter Gross. Can you throw any light on this one?
*(Editor: I could not trace the song either but reference to Lionel Pairpoint and his 'Lissaurer's Encyclopaedia of Popular Music in America' confirms that the song was published in 1934 and the most important recording of it was by Freddy Martin with the vocal by Elmer Feldkamp. The song was not used in a film or a show. It does not feature in Joel Whitburn's books of hits so it appears that it was not a success. Presumably Bing sang it on Woodbury but we have not been able to confirm this as we are still filling gaps in our knowledge of the content of the Woodbury shows. Incidentally broadcaster Paul Barnes is making a point of playing the relevant song from the calendar on the first day of each month so what he'll do when he gets to September I don't know. If any member has a recording of the song 'Your Love' by anyone could they send a cassette to me and I'll pass it on to Paul.)*

**George Patmore,** 53 Severn Way, Cressage, Shropshire SY5 6DS

Just in case no one else noticed them, here are a few items involving Bing which I spotted recently.

December 22, 1996 BBC2 8:30 - 9:30 p.m., a programme on Tony Bennett which included snippets of Bing - on the golf course, in the recording studio, in 'Blue of the Night' (Sennett), etc.
December 24, BBC2 11:30 - 1:15 film 'Murder in Manhattan' (Woody Allen). Allen refers to "when we met Bing Crosby walking down Fifth Avenue".
January 2, 1997 Channel 4 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. 'Dancing - Six Steps to Heaven' celebrating a variety of dance crazes. With the closing credits was Bing and the Rhythm Boys singing 'Happy Feet'.

On the Jimmy Young BBC Radio 2 programme during the last 'Children in Need' week, requests were made by various people for certain songs with a donation being made for the charity. One request came from a 'Jim and Margaret' for Bing singing 'Home on the Range' (1933). Beautiful - and they donated £2000! (Do we have them as ICC members?)

# BING & THE ANDREWS SISTERS - THEIR COMPLETE RECORDINGS TOGETHER

**Ken Barnes was so impressed by the new MCA album that he just had to write to us about it.**

The late Sammy Cahn defined teamwork as "When two guys pull together." There are, of course, many other definitions and one of the best I can think of is "Bing Crosby and The Andrews Sisters plus Vic Schoen's arrangements." Speaking as a record producer of some 30 years experience, this new 2-CD set of this team's work has been something of an eye-opener to me.

For one thing, it tells us that all the vocals were recorded on a single microphone with Bing on one side and the Andrews Sisters on the other facing each other. The vocal blend, the internal harmonic balance and the precision of their phrasing is nothing short of astonishing. In this age of multi-track techniques and clinically-observed acoustic separation, such conditions would be unthinkable. I can't imagine any of today's artists, engineers or producers even considering such a "suicidal" venture let alone doing it. And yet here it is on record and if Patty Andrews' comments and the studio photographs are to be believed, this is exactly the way it was. And the problem must have been even greater when Dick Haymes joined the group in 1946 for two Irving Berlin songs from "Annie Get Your Gun." But still the results were flawless. The band also was probably recorded on a single overhead microphone (with perhaps two or three boosters for piano, bass and drums). This, indeed, is teamwork of the highest order.

To my mind, this engrossing 2-CD album is one of the most outstanding ever compiled. I think that MCA, Steve Lasker, Andy McKaie, Wig Wiggins and the entire production team should be given some kind of a special citation for it. (What's the American equivalent of a knighthood ?) Moreover, this is the first time I have ever known a major record company give thanks and credit to a "bootleg" company. Apart from the excellence of the product, here we have diplomacy on a grand scale. The accompanying 20-page booklet - crammed with anecdotes and all available personnel and recording information - is a delight and Joseph F. Laredo's highly-readable notes are well-written and wonderfully informative (although I hardly think that Bing's work with the Andrews Sisters could be termed as " duets" ).

It is inferred that Bing initially resisted working with the, then, new sisters act and the presence of Joe Venuti on the first session may have been at his insistence on the grounds that, if the girls didn't measure up, it wouldn't be a total loss. I only make this theory because the next session didn't take place for another four years by which time the girls were much more famous and Venuti was conspicuously absent from all subsequent sessions.

How interesting to note that Vic Schoen arranged all but the last two sessions. On the evidence presented here, I think he was one of the most stunning arrangers of his day. He drew performances from Bing and the Andrews girls that were totally original for their day. Consider the opening verse of the 1939 "Ciribiribin" in which the girls echo all the stylistic trappings of the swing era and even offer faint traces of the be-bop phase that was still a few years off (was Ella Fitzgerald listening, I wonder ? ) and this leads into one of the most hip choruses that Bing ever sang (compare his phrasing with the woefully-square Crosby-ish chorus by the young Sinatra - recorded with Harry James in the same year. It would take Frank a couple more years to grasp the niceties of swing singing ).

As an arranger, Schoen knew instinctively what his singers were capable of and how far he could go with them. Listen, for example, to "Jingle Bells". Taken at a tempo so implausibly brisk it might have defeated most singers by turning the performance into a race between the soloist and the band. Bing not only sings it with clarity, perfect timing and preternatural ease, he also phrases with style and panache. When the Andrews Sisters enter, the phrase structure is then cleverly and sensibly doubled to give full rein to the sisters' famous blend and jive-phrasing. Then after the band have had their outing (with Archie Rosate's clarinet ), Bing and the girls play around with the final out-chorus and you realise that a great deal of thought has gone into turning this simple festive ditty into something quite special and, above all, a lot of fun.

What this marvellous album represents is a complete chapter in the individual careers of both Bing and the Andrews Sisters. If, with the passing of time, some of the pages are a little dog-eared this is due to some of the ill-chosen songs rather than the performances . But even when the material is second rate ("Betsy," " Forsaking All Others," "Sparrow In The Treetop"), the singers still managed to rescue something from the sessions by virtue of their own unique brand of vocal legerdemain. But when writers such as Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer, Harold Rome, Frank Loesser and the team of Burke and Van Heusen enter the picture, the results are positively top-drawer and irresistible. And this brings me to some of the real delights of the album. America, unlike England, is a country literally peppered with intriguingly-named towns and cities. Take, for instance, Johnny Mercer's "There's a Fella Waitin' in Poughkeepsie" which, apart from the title, allows Mercer full freedom to roam around the USA finding gals and guys waitin' everywhere "but I'm strictly on my own tonight." What magic to hear Bing relishing Mercer's marvellous rhymings of "Biloxi" with "proxy" and later, most topically for the time, with "bobbysoxy." I doubt if this would work in England.

"There's a Fella Waitin' in St. Albans" might scan OK but how on Earth do you rhyme it ?

Before the cue is given on the previously unissued take of this song, we can hear Bing trying out his own set of alternative rhymes to humorous effect. Then the take starts and when the girls sing the line "with the cutest dimple in his chin," Bing mischievously interjects "in like Flynn" which, considering his wholesome image, must have been the reason it was withheld.

When Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen were asked to write a piece of vaudeville material for Hope and Crosby to do in "Road To Rio" they came up with "Apalichcola, FLA " and while it worked nicely in the film, it works even better on record with Bing partnered by the Andrews Sisters because the extended format allowed Burke (one of the greatest yet curiously underrated lyricists) to really stretch out with some of the most tantalising word images on record. Bing sings "The ice cubes had a bitter taste in Sweetwater, Tex." To which Patty responds "The chili was too hot in Tucumcari, New Mex." Wordage like that makes me wonder why Burke, who wrote many great standards even before he worked with Van Heusen, is not more appreciated.

Another great lyricist, Frank Loesser - who started out writing words for the likes of Hoagy Carmichael and Burton Lane - eventually began composing his own melodies and became even more successful. "Tallahassee" (the capital city of FLA), one of the big hits from his pre-"Guys And Dolls" period, makes ideal fodder for Bing and the Andrews girls. I was both pleased and surprised to learn that the piano player on this track was none other than Paul Smith who, apart from playing on many of Ella Fitzgerald's recordings (including the famous "Songbooks") made a couple of good albums with Bing in the mid-70s and worked with Pete Moore and I on the Los Angeles session in 1976 that gave us Bing's fine rendering of Loesser's "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year" (which contains Paul's terrific solo on electric piano).

One other thing that this 2-CD set reveals to me in no uncertain terms is the excellence and skill of the Andrews Sisters. At one time it was fashionable to put them down as untalented neophytes. Success often attracts such stupid critical attitudes. But even from the very beginning the Andrews Sisters - Patty, Laverne and Maxene were a good, solid professional group. And they got even better as the years passed. You can point to dozens of singing sister groups whose talents and sounds were interchangeable, but hear four bars of any Andrews Sisters record and you can tell the difference immediately. They really did have their own sound. And this sound came mainly from Patty who, apart from being a superb lead singer, was a truly sensational soloist. This is not to belittle Laverne or Maxene - who provided super harmonic back-up and precision phrasing - but it was always Patty whose sexy sound cut through each recording to become the aural trademark of this magical trio. Her vocal contributions are as much a part of this album's success as Bing's.

Looking at the two CDs, I think the real riches are to be found on disc one. By the late 1940s things were beginning to change and a more pronounced country and western influence was creeping into the sessions. Not cleverly-crafted songs like "Along The Navajo Trail" or "Don't Fence Me In" but moribund items like "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" and "Forsaking All Others" with their cornball harmonies and lacklustre lyrics. Songs that were pleasant rather than potent. Fortunately, there were still Bing's film songs by dependable teams like Burke & Van Heusen and Leo Robin and Harry Warren which gave us musical gems like "High On The List" and "I'll Si Si Ya In Bahia." But the age of professionalism was fading. Although Vic Schoen was still coming up with fresh ideas that somehow reflected the times, his arrangement of "The Yodelling Ghost" shows a pronounced Billy May influence and Bing is overdubbed with an echo-chamber effect. But the advent of rock n' roll was just around the corner and, apart from the feeling that an era was ending, 1952 was also a year of personal sorrow for Bing when his first wife died.

Only Sinatra and a handful of artists like Ella, Nat Cole and Peggy Lee would take a successful stand against the oncoming tide of juvenile music. Dick Haymes was in decline, (although he did do two wonderful albums for Capitol in 1956 ), Perry Como and Doris Day turned their attentions to silly little novelty songs while, as a widower, Bing paid more attention to his screen career than his recording activities. This resulted in two very significant films "White Christmas" and "The Country Girl" (both 1954). The former was an all-time box office success while the latter gave him a dramatic role in which he amazed both critics and fans with the greatest and most subtle acting performance of his career.

The team of Crosby and the Andrews Sisters, however, ended their association on a high note of quality. Their unique vocal version of the Bob Crosby big band hit "South Rampart Street Parade" (with rousing lyrics by Steve Allen) turned out to be one of their very greatest tracks while the second song on the last session was an unusually subtle rendering of Bob Nolan's "Cool Water" which was much more expressive than the previous rendering by the Sons Of The Pioneers and light years away from Frankie Laine's belting version of a few years later.

Some of the songs in this magnificent set have little bearing on what is happening today in pop music. "Victory Polka" and "The Freedom Train" have gone beyond nostalgia and are now part of that wider picture known as history. But even here we can feel a sense of admiration for the skill and professionalism of Sammy Cahn's imaginative couplet "And we'll give a mighty cheer - when a ration book is just a souvenir." How many of today's pop fans and DJs would even understand what this line means? This excellent album has given me more pleasure and food for thought than any recording I have heard in the last ten years. I have played it several times in the last two weeks (it runs over two and a half hours) and each time I've discovered something fresh. I'm full of admiration for the artists who made the original music and

for the people who produced, compiled and documented it.

I believe it to be a palpable part of 20th century pop culture and is, in its own way, just as important as the Billie Holiday - Lester Young sessions of the 1930s, the Sinatra-Riddle Capitol albums, the Nat Cole-Billy May recordings, the Mel Torme - Marty Paich collaborations and the Ella Fitzgerald "Songbooks" of the 1950s and '60s. And if it isn't the greatest - to quote Johnny Burke - " it's certainly high on the list."

**Ken Barnes**

*(Editor: I can only agree with Ken - this is a superb album and congratulations to everyone associated with it for a great job. By the way, I rather like 'Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" and 'Forsaking All Others'. We're all different!)*

# LIONEL'S LINES

## "THAT CERTAIN PARTY"

The regular readers of this column will both know that on occasions, I am unable to prevent my shattered dreams from spilling onto these pages and at the time of writing, there are certain poignant anniversaries which coincide, arousing some of the most bittersweet memories and I find myself unwilling to listen to Bing Crosby singing songs which contain a particular girl's name.

This is the story of one of my earliest love affairs. Those of you, who prefer adult reading and are relishing the prospect of a bodice ripper, can leave now. Others may care to accompany me down the corridors of time to the age before 'partners' and 'sharers' and when 'hanky panky' was a distant speck in the romantic firmament. Back to the days when having 'ones own pad' was beyond the wildest dreams of a young man earning 32/6d per week and to those Saturday evenings when your 'significant other's' parents, shrewdly timed their "Goodnights" until exactly two minutes before the last bus left from the top of the road.

Mary and I came from opposite sides of the tracks. You might say that I played the John Garfield to her Alexis Smith. Let me hasten to add that she bore no physical resemblance to the ice-cool Ms Smith because, at the time, I was going through my 'raw-boned, slightly buck-toothed, redheads stage'.

The first time that I was taken to meet her parents, the trappings of wealth were all too apparent. From the Hillman Minx on the drive, to the porch light and the French windows, chicken for dinner when it wasn't Christmas, right down to the art deco, cocktail cabinet. ostentatiously displaying, a genuine soda water siphon and a bottle labelled 'Angostura Bitters' (little did I realise that this unfamiliar item would, eventually, be the cause of my downfall). Daddy was a dentist (Extractions 2/6d) and in addition to the opulent, semi-detached in Bryony Drive, described above, he leased rooms over the Home & Colonial Stores, in the High Road, which served as his waiting room and surgery. It would be indiscreet to mention his name here but (rather unfortunately for the profession he had chosen), his full initials were 'G.B.H.'

The opening introductions were 'sticky', to say the least. His clinical eye swiftly analysed my hand-knitted, khaki jumper (a present from Auntie Dumps) and the grey worsted trousers which steadfastly, refused to hold a crease and he said, with a slight inclination of the left nostril and just a dash of irony, "What an unusual and distinguished name" - Animosity blossomed at first sight!

The only time that I encountered any degree of approval was on the day of Mary' s birthday party. I had been asked to arrive a little earlier in order to assist with the preparations. These were still times of stark austerity and I was indoctrinated into various 'in house' codes, designed to overcome possible shortages in the buffet. For instance. if the tea-time fancies seemed to be going a little too well or should there be a run on the orange squash, I must respond to the whispered cipher 'FHB', meaning 'Family Hold Back' (leaving guests to have first crack at the dwindling delicacies). Having now signed the Official Secrets Act, I considered myself 'established' and this seemed to be confirmed when, with a crocodile smile, GBH said - "You'll have a drink." Anxious to display my recognition of a direct command, I sprang to attention and took the proffered pink liquid. For a moment, I suspected that I been selected as the guinea pig for a new mouthwash but he was drinking the same and to me it was merely, aromatic but flat Cherry Soda. I had another while my duties were outlined for the party games.

The guest list was comprised, mainly, of young friends and relatives and I downed a further dose of the rosy fluid before they began to arrive. Two and a half glasses later, found me on the settee, pinned between a narrow blonde with a worrying cough, whose specialised subject was her fingernails and a half-youth, half-fish who was burbling about the nickel-chrome exhaust on his 'Ariel something or other' motor bike but I was strangely, relaxed. I was giggling, helplessly, at the unfunny. My normal introversion was melting away. In fact, I was perilously close to doing my impression of Carmen Miranda singing, 'The Lady In The Tutti Frutti Hat" when the first parlour game was announced. I rose to my feet, ready to distribute the pencils and paper, then realised I'd made a ghastly error. I was feeling, decidedly, out of sorts. What was happening to the room? The floor was too close and approaching fast and like a condemned factory chimney, I toppled, face downward, entirely demolishing a small occasional table, laden with snacks and glasses of blackcurrant cordial. Only clouded memories remain of what happened next. I vaguely recall vain attempts to scrape the remains of mock-crab canapés and cheese straws from my roomy sports jacket (on loan from Uncle Wally) and distant voices saying. "He looks awful" (I felt awful)....."He's bleeding" (a cut thumb) ....."Someone should take him home" (How considerate) ...."Too many pink gins" (Ah! Hah!) and above all, a flashbulb impression of GBH with a spiteful grin which said, "I really love 'Good-byes'".

The 'fish' youth turned out to be the proverbial rock in a troubled sea. Showing remarkable initiative and no mean skill as a stunt rider, he got my semi-conscious body home, on his motor bike, with one hand behind his back, clutching my shirt, while the other hand attended to the steering. As I shakily let myself in, the last words I heard were from Mother, in the kitchen, "You're early. I thought you were going to a party!"

Please understand the embarrassment and shame that prevented me from rushing to offer a formal apology for my grisly misconduct. Besides, I had begun to harbour dark thoughts regarding a probable architect of my downfall. So, is it not surprising that my heart gives a slight lurch when Bing sings her name (and don't forget that even 'The Rose Of Tralee' was named 'Mary' !). One need not to have been a Lothario to find, at least, a couple of 'name' songs in his repertoire that jolt the memory. I do not know if anyone has the statistics but I would guess, including all sources, that there will be around 150 named 'girls' that he sang about - 'Amapola', 'Betsy', 'Cynthia', 'Dolores'...I'll leave you to pursue the alphabet while I take some of the others out to tea.

The name of songwriter, S.K 'Bob' Russell, may not ring any bells but if I mention such diverse subjects as, 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore', 'Ballerina', or, 'He Ain't Heavy, He' s My Brother', you will know from whence he comes. His speciality was writing English words for Spanish songs ('Brazil', 'Misirlou','Babalu' etc.) and in the first half of 1941, he had a hand in two of the three Latin American numbers that dominated the Hit Parade. We have one example, from radio, of Bing singing, 'Frenesi' and no less than four, of the five versions of 'Maria Elena' used on the Kraft Music Hall. The latter has a pleasing melody but I've always had slight reservations regarding the lyric. Awkwardly, the last 'a' in 'Maria' and the first 'e' in 'Elena' occupy the same note, obliging vocalists to ignore the correct title and sing, "Marie Elena" and there is also the not unheard of but still somewhat 'lame' repetition of the same rhyme in consecutive lines:

*'To me your voice is like the echo of a sigh,*
*And when you're near my heart can't speak above a sigh''*

With one exception, the four versions are difficult to date with absolute accuracy. All are 'different' and typically, on two of them, Bing manages to add a couple of unscripted words whilst maintaining the same number of syllables for an already crowded two bars:

*'Maria Elena, can't you say we'll never part...' instead of: 'Maria Elena, say that we will never part...*

He also wrestles with the quandary (encountered by other vocalists) concerning the correct pronunciation of 'Elena' and prefers 'Eleena' to 'Elayna'. These slight aberrations, rectified in later(?) renditions, do nothing to detract from the Crosby seal of quality. Why didn't he record it? Was it considered too late? 1941 was that year when he was absent from the studios until May 23rd by which time the Jimmy Dorsey/Bob Eberly version was already climbing the charts.

If the gender of 'Mickey' (27.4.39) is in any doubt, all is revealed (hopefully!) in the first words. 'Mickey, pretty Mickey with your hair of raven hue...' and if 'smilin', 'beguilin' and Bing' s own hint of brogue fail to betray her antecedents, the clincher comes with, '...a bit of Killarney, bit of the Blarney...'. The song was composed in 1918 by Harry Williams and Neil Moret for a picture of the same name, starring Mabel Normand and had the Academy Awards been in existence at that time, would probably have scooped the Oscar as the sole contender, being one of the first songs to be written, specifically, as a background theme to promote a silent film.

'Marie' (28. 10.37), 'Rosalie' (6. 1.38) and 'The Rose Of Tralee' (20.3.41) all pre-empt Bing's commercial excursions. 'Marie' is the clear winner with a 28 year gap. John Scott's arrangement flirts with John Philip Sousa and Crosby delivers the finished product with his customary lazy perfection. 'Marie' had been a 'sleeper' for nine years before the huge success of the Tommy Dorsey version with the band singing 'filler' lyrics behind Jack Leonard's vocal. Dorsey had changed Irving Berlin's original waltz to a 4/4 time signature and initially, the composer was delighted, ordering 500 copies of the record for distribution to disc-jockeys with his personal recommendation. There is more to this tale but language difficulties prevent me from repeating all of the words exchanged between bandleader and composer. Any interested parties should refer to Laurence Bergreen's biography of Berlin.

*Mary Martin, Wingy Manone and Bing on KMH in 1942.*

'Rose O'Day' might easily have been dismissed as, 'another nonsense song' but this did not prevent it becoming a Top Ten hit, in all categories, i.e., Radio airings, sheet music, record sales and jukebox plays. It made one of its earliest appearances on Kraft Music Hall and we are fortunate enough to have examples of Bing doing the 'Filla-ga-dusha's' with both Connie Boswell (20. 11.41) and her 'replacement', Mary Martin (29. 1.42). It was about this time that Kraft's executives distributed a press release, stating that Miss Boswell was 'on leave of absence from the show'. Her bitter retort to this was, "I

don't know why they put out such stuff. To put it plainly, I was fired. They wanted Mary Martin in my place, so they hired her."

In early 1947, the song, 'Linda' was used on three separate occasions. Once again, all versions are different and a simple identification can be made by comparisons of the line (as written), "Can't help feeling gloomy, think of all the lovin' I've missed" but were you aware that these airings of the number, provide a tenuous link between Bing and The Beatles or perhaps, Creamy Garlic Kiev? Composer, Jack Lawrence, tells the story, "In 1943, I was a Lieutenant in the US Maritime Service....My attorney, at the time, was also a close friend....One day he said to me, 'Jack, do me a big favour. You know my wife, Louise, has a great song in her name.....my son, Johnny has lots of 'Johnny' songs he can claim and my daughter, Laura is proud of the beautiful song with her name but my one daughter, Linda, feels left out. How about writing a song especially for her.....I obliged..... nothing happened with the song until I was out of the service in 1946.....So, Linda Eastman, finally had her own song and grew up to marry Paul McCartney."

As always, in these 'stories behind the song' there are anomalies. If the time scale is accurate, there were already, at least, two songs by reputable songwriters, in existence, entitled 'Linda' (Ted Koehler & Harold Arlen - 1930 and Al Stillman & Chas & Harry Tobias -1929). Could not one of these have filled the bill? Would Linda Eastman, at barely two years of age been clamouring for her 'own song' ? And would sister, Laura, have been aware of 'her song', not written until 1945? The real enigma has only just begun. Who wrote the song? This gets complicated and I require your assistance - I have a copy of sheet music of the song that Bing sings. Words and music are attributed to Jack Lawrence. Two copyright dates are shown - 1944 and 1946 and there is also a reference that 'Linda' was introduced in the film, 'The Story Of G.I. Joe'. Ken Bloom's estimable 'Hollywood Song' which is based on the actual studio cue sheets also credits Lawrence with the song although the composer-lyricist for the film's score is noted as, Ann Ronell. Two more works of reference name Jack Lawrence alone, while a further two, split the honours between him and Ann Ronell. Yet another two books, show separate songs (one for each composer) dated 1945 (Ronell) and 1947 (Lawrence). The final and irrefutable piece of information is, that a song called 'Linda' was nominated for the 1945 Academy Award. Had it won, the sole recipient would have been, Ann Ronell. The key lies in 'The Story Of G.I. Joe', starring Burgess Meredith and Robert Mitchum. Was it the same song? It is fifty years since I saw the film. Memory fades and I see there is no video. What do you know?

1947 was a thin year for Irving Berlin. 'Annie Get Your Gun' and 'Blue Skies' had taken care of the previous year but needing something to keep him in bagels, before embarking on the film 'Easter Parade', he came up with an inconsequential trifle which enjoyed a mild success in the closing months of the year. Bing, had ulterior motives for including 'Kate' (3.12.47) on Philco Radio Time, as evidenced by his introduction, "My father once courted a young lady named, Kate whom I now call, 'Mother'. After all this time, Irving Berlin has finally, come up with the words and music that would have helped Dad out, considerably had they been available then. Anyhow, I hope Mr. & Mrs. H.L. Crosby Senior of North Hollywood will enjoy the following....."

Two 'girl' Oscar nominees were featured on Chesterfield. The original title for the movie, 'Captain Carey USA' was, 'After Midnight' and as such it was released in this country. A title song called 'After Midnight' was written by Livingston & Evans but for the purposes of plot, it required Italian words which were written by an unknown, professor of Italian. The song nominated (and winner) was 'Mona Lisa' - figure that out! In 1956, the number turned up as one of the songs that Bing, 'wished he'd sung the first time around' and while we need not take album titles too seriously, he had already sung it twice on Chesterfield and to my ears, the lesser heard, second version (25.10.50) although slightly shorter, has more of the Crosby finesse.

The other challenger was 'Wilhelmina' (29.3.50) from the Betty Grable musical, 'Wabash Avenue'. The credentials should have been impeccable with words by Mack Gordon, acknowledged as Hollywood's most successful lyricist and the song makes a lively opener for the show, with accompaniment by the Rhythmaires but Bing is guilty of a some wishful thinking when he claims that the tune is 'sweeping the country' as, compared with the other four nominees for that year, 'Wilhelmina' didn't lay a finger on the broom handle.

One of the most popular waltzes of all time is another of those pieces, written to accompany a silent film. The movie was, 'What Price Glory?' and the tune, 'Charmaine'. As well as providing a boost to the economy, over the years, for the likes of Guy Lombardo, Mantovani and The Bachelors, this sentimental ballad has found much favour among jazz musicians. It was used on the Kraft Music Hall, in 1936. but it is fairly safe to say the only opportunity you will have of hearing Bing Crosby singing a full version of the song, will be from the Chesterfield Show of 20th February 1952.

It' s 'quittin' time' and we've not been able to help 'Mandy' to 'make up her mind', haven't been 'ramblin' with 'Rose' or even said, 'Goodnight' to 'Irene' and as a post script to what some may consider to have been an abrupt ending to my 'true romance', I must advise that any reconciliation with Mary became academic when, three days later, I was 'called to the colours'. As my train steamed out of Euston, I nursed the fleeting hope that in true Hollywood fashion, Mary might appear, running alongside the carriage, crying, "I love you. Come back safely. I love youuuu...." and broken-hearted, I stared mistily from the window, quietly contemplating how Jennifer Jones had managed to avoid colliding with the porter's trolley and the chocolate machine or, even worse, the signal gantry at the end of the platform.

**Lionel Pairpoint**

*(Editor: Lionel has prepared a supporting cassette to his article which includes most of the 'girls' mentioned (and others). Cost £3 inc. p. & p. and contribution to Club funds. Order direct from Lionel. Wig will provide separate instructions to members in the USA and Canada.)*

# Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

If a poll were taken I imagine that HIGH SOCIETY and WHITE CHRISTMAS would emerge as very close contenders for Bing's most popular film among the general public. That this is reflected by the amount of screenings these two films are given is not, therefore, surprising; and once again the tri-annual listing reveals the various film programmers' desire to present 'the best of Bing' in much the same manner as the producers of compact discs play it safe. Of the two, HIGH SOCIETY will always come out on top I imagine, principally because of the counter attraction of Mr. Sinatra and the cool allure of Grace Kelly. The nine screenings for this period certainly support this contention. Of course, the 'Road' films are also hugely popular, but with seven to choose from even us aficionados are hard pressed to select an all-time firm favourite from the adventures of our trail blazing trio of travellers. But why try? Enough that we can enjoy each and every film on its merits at any time.

**NOVEMBER**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HIGH SOCIETY | Sky Movies Gold | 24th. |
| ROAD TO RIO | Sky Movies Gold | 26th. |

**DECEMBER**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HIGH SOCIETY | BBC1 | 22nd. |
| WHITE CHRISTMAS | SkyMovies Gold | 25th. |
| HIGH SOCIETY | TNT | 31st. |

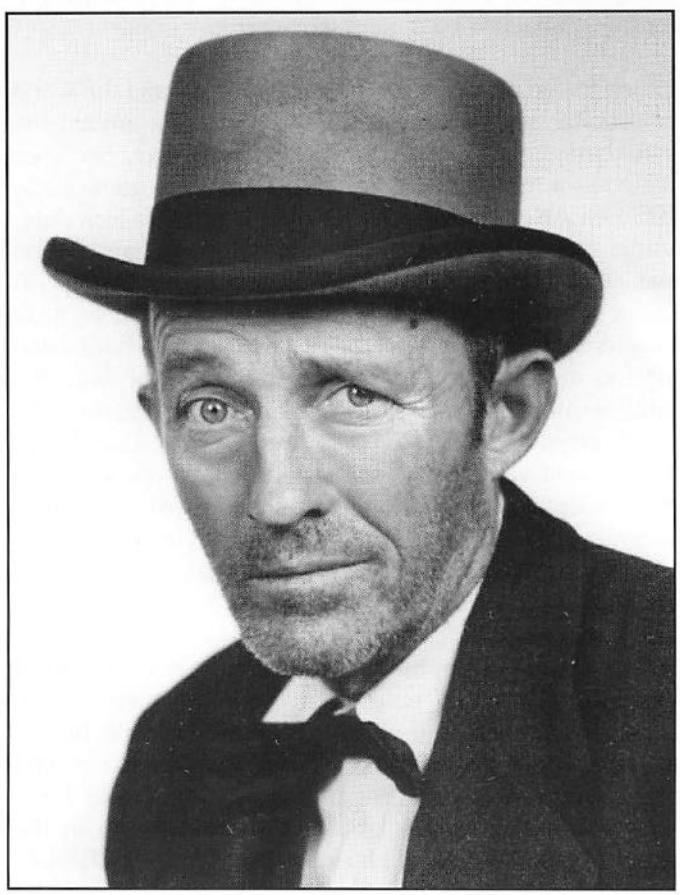
**JANUARY**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SAY ONE FOR ME | Movie Channel | 3rd. 12th. 25th. |
| HIGH TIME | Sky Movies | 16th. 28th. |
| THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT | Sky Movies Gold | 16th. |
| THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT 2 | TNT [2 screenings] | 6th |

**FEBRUARY**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HIGH SOCIETY | TNT | 3rd. 10th. 11th. 15th. 19th. 20th. |
| STAGECOACH | Sky Movies | 9th. 19th. |
| ROAD TO RIO | SkyMoviesGold | 18th. |
| ROAD TO BALI | Sky Movies Gold | 25th. |
| THE ROAD TO HONG KONG | Sky Movies Gold | 28th. |

At last the correct version of STAGECOACH! A different channel this time, but all part of the Sky Satellite movie package. This all action - all talking - no singing western drama was, as most will know, Bing's last full-length feature film and, maybe, an ill-considered re-make of an Academy Award nominated classic. Almost any re-make suffers by comparison; probably because a good story, once told, can never have quite the same impact again. Even certain silent movies will always remain 'first and best' in the public eye; and I would quote PHANTOM OF THE OPERA as a good example. The addition of, initially, dialogue and, later, colour, is not in itself good enough reason to attempt to re-create a minor masterpiece. Even Fred Reynolds in his matchless book, ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD, finds it essential to make considerable reference to the original even going so far as to print the actors alongside the subsequent participants; and by that inclusion we find practically the quintessential cast for any drama based on this particular and unique part of American history. If Bing were not in this film I would see no real reason to watch it and have it in my collection. But, having said that, it is best to appreciate and enjoy it as being a part of Bing's very varied career and admire him for having a go at one of Hollywood's greatest genres, even if it is difficult to disassociate him from the greater glory of his musical and comedic past.



After a twenty year absence it is time, surely, for a re-play of one or, better still, both of the PARKINSON programmes featuring Bing, but at least there was a soupcon to savour when on Friday, 20th. December at 10.25 pm BBC1 screened a fifty minute programme entitled PARKY AT CHRISTMAS. Even before the host walked out on stage there was Bing opening the show with "Hello Parky", his lively parody of "Hello Dolly" from the 1975 edition. Seated alongside a giant screen Michael Parkinson, who most international followers of the Crosby career will know as the UK's erstwhile most celebrated chat-show host, introduced each segment with anecdotal offerings on the pleasures and perils of presenting to the public personalities from the world of sport, politics, entertainment and the arts. The audience, itself liberally sprinkled with familiar faces, responded enthusiastically to these magic moments from the archives, and with Mr. Crosby only one of three guests to be given repeat exposure in this recent programme (the other two were Muhammad Ali and Bob Hope) it is apparent that our man was indeed a popular guest in two, big production, presentations. In a linking sequence based on Parkinson's theatrical participation, Bing's second honourable appearance featured him duetting with his host a parodied version of the Johnny Mercer - Andre Previn song "The Pleasure Of Your Company" about which Bing had remarked; "If you're any good I'll stop touring and manage you." At the conclusion of the rehearsal the almost tuneless and very brave presenter turned to his guest star and said; "Well, what d'you think?", to which Bing replied; "Guess I'm back on the road again!" "And he was," proffered Parky, with just that right amount of revered admiration. However, perhaps it's an unfortunate reflection on public taste that from a guest list of some seven hundred super-stars and eminent personalities from many walks of life Michael Parkinson is best remembered for being attacked by a giant glove puppet emu!

Lifting the lid on the trivia chest this time around the world of snooker and Alfred Hitchcock both figure among the barely mentionable minutia to which yours truly becomes drawn as a moth to a flame. The green baize game show BIG BREAK, hosted by Jim Davidson and side-kick John Virgo, threw up the question to a lady contestant; "Who was actor Harry Crosby more commonly known as?" A rather sneakily disguised enquiry, but the producer must have considered that 'singer' for 'actor' would have been far too easy. However, the lady hesitated for only the briefest moment before giving the correct answer. At which point John 'Pot As-Many-Balls-As-You-Can' Virgo interpolated with; "I like that Scottish joke about Bing." And, adopting his idea of a strong north of the border accent, added: "What's the difference between Bing Crosby and Walt Disney? ..... Bing sings, Walt Disney!" Ouch!

So, what's the tie up, then, between crooner Cros, one of the most laid-back, easy going, relaxed men in the business and the master of the macabre, Alfred Hitchcock, who was surely the founding father of cinematic nail-biting tension and suspense? Let us analyse, or should I say 'Psycho'-analyse, the situation. Whilst caught up in the drama of the final reel of Hitchy's 1937 film SABOTAGE, wherein the heroine in a small cinema, owned by her and her husband, who she suspects of evil doing and villainous intent, sits pondering and perplexed, as well she might as a carving knife and a bomb are soon to raise the tension, I was intrigued to see up on the screen a scene unfolding from the animated cartoon 'Who Killed Cock Robin'. Most readers will be aware that the robin character is a musical parody of Bing, whistling and boo-boo-booing his serenade to an over-plump hen in the persona of Mae West. On the screen a shadowy figure draws back a bow string and robin falls mortally wounded, an arrow embedded in his tawny breast. In a side aisle seat the heroine, by mental imagery, clutches hers! Can it be....?!!!

It's rather an unfortunate aspect of a four-monthly magazine that here I sit in mid-February writing about the Christmas and New Year period of radio Crosbyana. The enthusiasm for Jingle Bells and White Christmas palls somewhat in the wake of Shrove Tuesday pancakes, the onset of spring and yet again not receiving any Valentine cards! Nonetheless I have been the grateful recipient of many cassettes from members anxious to keep us all informed of who's been playing what to whom on the wireless.

# BENNY GREEN

Never one to be overly generous in either praise or presentation of the recording career of Mr. Crosby, it came as a pleasant surprise to hear his broadcast of the 19th. January wherein Bing was the principal participant. This as a direct result of the seven compact discs which had been donated to the doyen of nationally transmitted disc jockeys through member generosity. Indeed, he likened it to a tidal wave of Crosbyana about which he said;

> *"I make myself play it partly out of respect for the vast army of Crosby fans and partly because some of what he recorded is now social history, and all the more interesting for that. Crosby was the first of the sotto voce singers. Men, and women, who didn't have to bellow to be heard at the back of the gallery. That's why Crosby is important in the historic sense. He had a weakness for third rate songs - every singer does - but with Crosby it seemed like part of a campaign."*

So, casting aside such classic million sellers like "San Antonio Rose", and derisively dismissing "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral", Benny's first choice of a Sunday afternoon spin was the Bing and Connie duet "An Apple For The Teacher"; the minor Burke - Monaco classic from THE STAR MAKER, quickly followed by "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby" and "I'm An Old Cow-Hand"; the former introduced by Dick Powell.

Lamenting the lack of much information, especially dates, on the CDs, which is a very valid comment, Benny commented that dates were particularly important with Bing because in the 'Thirties his voice underwent a drastic change: "When he made the early hits the texture of the voice was magnificent. It was full and rich without being overdone. It was that vocal quality that singled him out. Later he was to lose some of this richness but compensated by refining his style." Next came a

"Thoroughly charming period piece on which The Mills Brothers dominate without credit"; namely "Shine". Do the producers ever actually listen to the recordings Benny asks? And rightly so; for this is not an uncommon occurrence. In commenting on the idiotic plots of most of the 'Thirties film musicals, and how artistes redeemed them, Benny played two excellent examples: "Pennies From Heaven" and "With Every Breath I Take", the latter being a perfect illustration of the rich texture of Bing's earlier voice he commented. After a three song break from a new Mel Torme collection, himself a great admirer of Bing, Benny returned to the Crosby scene on CD via the new double album of Bing and The Andrews Sisters, from which fifty-three track collection he had difficulty in finding anything much of interest, though the film HERE COME THE WAVES found favour, mainly by virtue of the composers involved, which led into "There's A Fellow Waiting In Poughkeepsie". One of many American songs featuring place names, most of which sound far more beguiling or interesting than any in the UK. Who could deny that "I Left My Heart In Woodham Ferrers" doesn't quite have that ring of romance about it? Though Mr. Green had decided that Poughkeepsie might well have come into the same category. Silly, but at least straightforward, was his comment on the next track which came from the film MR MUSIC. Though having seen it he'd forgotten about Groucho Marx and Peggy Lee's appearance in it and hoped Peggy Lee hadn't sang "Life Is So Peculiar". Returning to HERE COME THE WAVES for his next song Benny Green related how lyricist Johnny Mercer had once read that the famous Harlem preacher Father Divine had repeatedly used the expression 'you must accentuate the positive' in his sermons. But years went by before he had been able to work this into a cod-revivalist number that Crosby always enjoyed playing about with. All four songs from that film were first class, with Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer on top form for a film that was a flag-waving-cum-lampoon of the bobby-sox era. Who, exactly, was Bing lampooning? Dare we ask! Benny denies the validity of the philosophy expressed in "There's No Business Like Show Business", his final track for this Crosby session, but loves the song. Irving Berlin of course. An hour's entertainment that was a worthwhile if at times controversial contribution to the Crosby cause, but it is patently evident that without the continued support and pressure by the Crosby lobby, as we are often referred to, programmes such as this would never occur. Correspondence and 'phone calls received from members anxious to keep Bing on the air in the face of the continuous decline of our kind of music on the BBC suggests that there must be no let up. As wartime posters used to proclaim: GO TO IT!

# CHRISTMAS WITH CROSBY

A much used title, with variations on the theme, over the years. Here it was the turn of Bernie Quayle beaming out the Yuletide cheer from that rather special sea girt terrain which in the dawn of history surfaced in the centre of the Irish Sea. The Isle of Man no less. Discounting the fact that some small amount of Bernie's imparted information lacked a certain accuracy (and he has since been gently corrected) this was an enjoyable programme taking in material as much from radio as commercial recordings. Coming from a family of Crosby fans, Bernie related how as a boy he heard Bing Crosby singing a beautiful song on AFN and Bing saying afterwards, 'Now you've heard the song I hope you'll enjoy the movie.' to which Bernie's Irish mother said "There, Bernard, he's talking to you. He knows you're going to the pictures tomorrow night." Bernie continued; "When, the next evening, we left home in Upper Church Street, Douglas, the church bells around the corner were ringing; and mum said, 'See! They're even ringing the bells for you tonight', and I was going to see the film just like Bing had said to me on the radio." The church in Bernie's story was St. Mary's in Hill Street and, as you've probably guessed by now both the song and the film shared the same title. "A magical childhood memory that's never left me", he recounted, and followed up with the recording. Much of the programme was built around Mr. Quayle's early memories, including the joy of owning a Roy Rogers holster complete with shootin' iron. Cue for "Pistol Packin' Mama". Indeed, this recording is firmly entrenched in my own memory of my uncle and his family who stayed with us off and on through the war. Bing's ad lib line 'Lay that thing down before it goes off and hurts somebody' greatly amused my relative, and the whole scene of that moment in our living room with Bing and the Andrews Sisters' voices coming out of our sun-rays facia radio is relived whenever I hear the record played. Next attention was turned to radio, and the "Anniversary Song" with Jolson who Bernie noted had great difficulty in adapting to the then modern crooning style, the origins of which, especially the word itself, were traced in some depth. The programme's songs were linked with biographical detail and anecdotal dialogue presented in an engaging manner that had one firmly believing that here, indeed, was a true Crosby fan. Duets were featured from the Kraft Music Hall, with such celebrated stalwarts as Durante, Garland and Armstrong in three, unrelated, excerpts. The Yuletide season itself being celebrated with "White Christmas", a radio version of "Adeste Fideles" and "Jingle Bells". We all like to hear those quotes on Crosby from Sinatra, I guess, and the programme didn't disappoint in that regard. When asked Frank said; "Sure I'm a fan of Crosby. Everybody's a fan of Crosby!". He (Bing) made it all look so easy, just as if he was busy doing nothing. Put capitals and quotation marks on those last three words and you have the antepenultimate song which preceded "Straight Down The Middle" and the closing 'Blue of the Night'. Bernie acknowledged the help he had had from the ICC, and Maggie Ryan, especially, and is to be congratulated in putting together a programme of appreciable variety presented in the Christmas spirit of joyful enthusiasm.

Barry Whittingham made a beneficial appearance on radio for Bing, the Circle and himself, in that order, when on 31st January he was the guest of John Richards in the latter's BBC Radio Lincolnshire programme. J.R., as he is wont to be addressed, plays recordings dating from cylinders through to the demise of popular music as we know it; with plenty of emphasis on Bing, and the early jazz scene. During the course of their fifteen minute 'phone-in chat a couple of tracks from two of Barry's CD productions were played. "It's Only A Paper Moon", with the preceding humorous dialogue from 'We're Just Wild

About Harry', and "Don't Get Around Much Any More" as featured on 'Bing On Radio Vol. 2 - With Buddy Cole'. J.R. quizzed Barry on the aims and structure of the ICC and just why Barry was so keen a Bing fan as to actually produce compact discs. Barry came up with all the right answers and also acknowledged the help he had received from Ernest Sutkowski with his successful project of putting on to CD in such good fidelity material that would not otherwise be so conveniently available. Michael Crampton's address was read out, so maybe some interest will come a-gallopin' in from listeners resident in that famous hunting shire.

## AROUND THE REGIONS

Since the last time I found myself collating this column, I've received at least fifteen C90 cassettes from Stan White, Maggie Ryan and John James, two of whom have also received some of these air-shots from other sources in the first place. That's at least twenty-two hours of Bing on the wireless brought to the attention of the magazine readers by keen devotees of Der Bingle. It's very good news that there is an increasing amount of Crosby material being broadcast, though it has to be said that on national network the only regular spot is Desmond Carrington Radio 2 on Sundays. On his Christmas special he actually played three Bing songs, opening the programme with "A Time To Be Jolly" and, from the same album closing with "A Christmas Toast" over which he raised his glass to all his listeners for a happy and peaceful Christian celebration. During the course of this special, not entirely devoted to seasonal songs, he featured Bing and Basie with "Snowbird". Also heard in the Carrington collection of Crosbyana was Bing relating the 'Holiday Inn' saga, with songs; "Siboney", a rarely heard recording accompanied by the rumba king Xavier Cugat; "Well, Did You Evah?; "April In Portugal"; "Life Is So Peculiar", and "The Banjo's Back In Town" about which Desmond commented "Honestly, there really is nothing that Bing hasn't sung about!" Keith Skues continues to play some Bing from time to time, particularly featuring "The Things We Did Last Summer", a recording that seems to have caught on for this quarter. This column is just too soon for his late-February update of his Skuesograph which, on the last report, had Bing breaking the hundred point barrier snapping at the heels of Daniel O'Donnell. Keith reports 2,700 song titles entered into the graph from listeners throughout a dozen counties. We await the outcome with baited breath!

Ray Mansell, from South & West, stated what many would agree with that "Now You Has Jazz", which he played, would definitely be in his desert island eight. I'd have to be incarcerated in the neighbourhood of two adjacent islands, with a small boat available to row from one to t'other. One would be my Crosby paradise, the other the non-Bing island, with two portable gramophones and two little piles of precious discs! As fascinating as it is to contemplate that ultimate eight it is, of course, far more enjoyable to come down to earth and be able to enjoy whatever recording springs to mind. Listening to Ray playing "Sunday, Monday Or Always" illustrated this day by day availability of so much good music. In this same programme Ray also featured "I'll Capture Your Heart", reminiscing on the plot of the film from which each song had been taken. Other tracks heard on Ray's programme, which he hosts with an assist from Tony Gilliam, have been "Tea For Two" and "Road To Morocco" among quite a few others, all presented with descriptive dialogue that leaves one to believe that Bing is very well loved and respected down there in the west country. In the closing stages of 1996 a Bodmin Moor listener queried Ray about a song entitled "On The Isle Of May", convinced that Bing had recorded it. Ray contacted his local Crosby guru, Maggie, who advised him that Bing had neither recorded nor had he ever sung it at all. Eventually it was discovered that the singer was Kenny Baker, but no copy could be found, not even in the BBC's central library. Maggie sent out an all-stations plea on behalf of the frustrated listener and it finally came to hand through the good offices of Frank Wappat; digitally restored and on cassette ready to be aired. An example of the ICC network of friends helping out even with non-Bing items!

The Cumbrian, Northumberland and adjacent regions of Britain are well served by Anne Hopper and Frank Wappat, the former on her Sunday show featuring from Philco 29th. December 1948 "Cuanto La Gusta" with Peggy Lee; "The Song Is You" from the now nationally famous gold-plated CD, and the Ken Barnes-Pete Moore re-work of "Love Is The Sweetest Thing". "On the Sunnyside Of The Street" and Bing & Judy duetting "Mine" illustrated, as Anne said "How well Crosby worked with anyone. An unselfish performer always allowing his partner to shine." Later she was to play "Anything You Can Do", "Mr. Gallagher And Mr. Shean" and "The Oldest Established" - with a practically off-mic Dean Martin. What happened in that CD transfer I wonder? Though he's barely any more audible on the LP. "I Love You Whoever You Are" and "Something Sort Of Grandish" give some idea of the wide range of Crosby material featured on 'Ann Hopper's Music Box'.

Over on the east coast Frank continues to enhance his old 78s by filtering out the snap, crackle and pop. A welcome sound at breakfast time (unless you've a hangover) but agreeable avoided here on his Stars On Sunday programme. In a special 'gospel' presentation he played four rarely heard Bing hymns, each one introduced with dignified commentary. Shame on me in admitting that it is quite some while since I last listened to Frank's selection of "Holy, Holy, Holy"; "O God, Our Help In Ages Past"; "O Lord, I Am Not Worthy", and "He Leadeth Me". A further rarity which, though very interesting, is of debatable merit, was "Pinetop's Boogie Woogie". A great band, Lionel Hampton, but one of those 're-makes' perhaps best left to the original performer. Another great band is Woody Herman, and though "Deep In the Heart Of Texas" is a 'best of' regular it's a rousing recording played here direct from digital restoration and sounding quite something. Rounding off Frank's contribution to the Crosby cause we have "Blue Hawaii", "Be Careful, It's My Heart" and, one of the all-time jazz classics, "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn"

# 78 VINTAGE

The best bit of news to impart is that John Gunn is not only out of hospital but back in the driving seat kept warm for him by John Hayes. Which means that BBC Essex listeners can once again rely on their Crosby requests receiving his ultimate attention regardless of obscurity. Indeed, with the playing of "Beware" John threw down the gauntlet in asking if anyone can come up with anything rarer. However, with Wally Oldfield standing in the wings armed with one of the best collections in the business J.G. is on pretty firm ground. John returned on the 21st. December and celebrated the event by playing two tracks by Mr. C. Firstly, a promotional recording for the film HOLIDAY INN wherein Bing and Marjorie Reynolds join together for the first ever presentation of 'you know what' and, secondly, as a personal choice, he gave thanks to the nurses and staff at the hospital, and to all listeners who had written and sent get-well cards, by playing the appropriately titled "I'll Be Home For Christmas". In the subsequent eight weeks covered here, John indulged in distinctive diversification that included "Mississippi Mud - I Left My Sugar Standing In The Rain" take -2; "Down By The River"; "Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle"; Bing's duet with Dixie - "A Fine Romance", through to "Busy Doing Nothing"; "Mountain Greenery" and, from Philco Radio Time, the great comedy duet with 'Schnozzola', "The Song's Gotta Come From The Heart" featuring Bing singing a spirited rendition of "Dark Eyes", more commonly known as "Oci Cernyija". The Kraft Music Hall of February 1945, via Barry Whittingham's 'We're Just Wild About Harry' CD, was the source for "I'm Making Believe" as a further sample of Bing from his many years on the wireless. Not just for this period but for continuous dedication and meritorious variety, John is the recipient of my 'Not The Best Of Bing' award for this issue. If there are any mystified new readers may I explain that, as with the TV programme 'Not The 9 O'clock News', this column takes an alternative (though less irreverent) look at the often depressing - by repetition - presentation of Crosby songs from LPs, and now CDs, which producers have entitled 'The Best Of Bing Crosby'. As stated previously: 'It ain't necessarily so'! The 'award' goes to those presenters who delve a little deeper into the Crosby archives, proving to all who care listen that, as the Bard wrote, 'all that glisters is not gold'.

# GOLD FOR GROWN UPS

Barnsey at the Beeb continues to provide the greatest source of Crosbyana for listeners within range of the Norwich studio signals, and from mid-December alone I've noted over forty tracks of great variation and sheer entertainment. Impossible to list them all but, from the Yuletide period, a pleasant alternative to the annual favourite, Bing duetting "White Christmas" with Ella Fitzgerald on a 1953 GE. Christmas show; "Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town"; "Snow"; the Bing and Frank sentimental medley of "Till We Meet Again", and also with Mr. Sinatra "We Wish You The Merriest" and "You Never Had It So Good"; a rousing recording from 1964 with Fred Waring & His Pennsylvanians. Paul thought this might be from some obscure Australian source, but it was a commercial release in the USA firstly on an album entitled 'America, I Hear You Singing' later re-issued as 'This Land Is Your Land'. Having been the recipient of the ICC calendar, Paul decided to greet each new month with the illustrated song but, unfortunately, fell at the first fence for "I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin'" was not in his collection. So it was that "Love In Bloom", from the same film, was played as a stand-in. However Paul was back in the running with the February track "Too Late", courtesy of our Editor, and also gave a spin to another early favourite, "There's A Cabin In The Pines", almost, though not quite, hanging this one on the C & W peg, about which style of music Paul is unashamedly derisive.

Barnsey related an amusing story of a flightless Chinese goose nicknamed 'The Boss' which lords it over other geese at Reedham Ferry Inn, Norfolk. This wily wildfowl, having been taken ill, not only made the local press but was musically upstaged by Bing - The Boss - singing "Birds Of A Feather" as a sort of get-well dedication on P.B.'s programme. This latest recipient of a Crosby serenade can be added to two bears, a couple of dogs, a camel and maybe other four-legged fauna, fish or fowl that I've overlooked, as his films are very likely to reveal! Barnsey favourites Johnny Mercer and Connie Boswell are always featured duetting with Bing, and "Lady On The Two-Cent Stamp" had another recent delivery. From 'way back when' we heard take-3 of "Mississippi Mud - I Left My Sugar Standing in The Rain", The Rhythm Boys first 'solo' effort, and leaping forward to the near close of the Crosby career, Paul expressed amazement at how well this rather special septuagenarian sounded with "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and noted the great company he was in on the record. I'm sorry to say that "Sweet Leilani" was given the thumbs down by Paul as "one of the most infamous of all the Academy Award songs", so much so that he refused to play it on air. His personally expressed opinion to which Paul is entitled. In my own book it rates highly among the Hawaiian numbers, especially by the wonderful contrast of Bing's rich baritone supremacy over the rather thin, tenor voice of George Kainpau, who leads the first chorus. It certainly illustrates who is The Boss on here! All is forgiven though, Paul, for playing "The Moon Got In My Eyes" - 'around the middle of January', as requested by me in the Christmas issue of BING. It continued a moon theme that P.B. had pursued through late summer and autumn and came close enough to my natal day as could be expected. Thank you; and though 'moon and June' became hackneyed phrasing in tin-pan alley it is still a worthwhile theme to continue with from the Crosby catalogue. There's a lot of good titles to consider. "Gigi" was played for Jim Reilly, with Leslie Gaylor, Stan White and all members of the ICC being part of this dedication. Paul promoted the ICC and Jim's remarkable book 'The Songs Of Bing Crosby On Compact Disc'. A 'must' for all serious collectors.

Lots of other good tracks, too many to mention, have been featured on the Barnsey Bing-fest, but let us turn our attention now to Sunday the 26th. January which date had Paul celebrating the birthday of the composer who named himself after a shirt: Jimmy Van Heusen (1913-

1990). As all will know he wrote the music for most of the 'Road' pictures - five in fact - and other Crosby films; so it was inevitable that any number of Bing's songs would be featured. Not all sung by The Boss in the programme but acknowledged as being by him in the first place. Paul put forward an interesting idea arising from Dick Todd singing the 1939 track "All This And Heaven Too". Having heard this very pleasant recording which he co-wrote with Eddie DeLange could it have been that Van Heusen was influenced and went on to adapt his way of writing a tune with Harry Lillis in mind. The question being was The Canadian Crosby a flying test bed for Bing? An ingenious but fictional hypothesis, or one that might be more fact than fancy? Kick it around among yourselves. In the two hour programme there were six Bing tracks all of them from films: "Going My Way", the film's title tune; "You Don't Have To Know The Language" from ROAD TO RIO, as was "But Beautiful" - an expression that also applies to the recording itself; "You're Dangerous", sung to Miss Lamour in ROAD TO ZANZIBAR; "Moonlight Becomes You", again Dottie being the enamoured one and recipient of Bing's most famous 'Road' ballad - Morocco of course - and, finally, "Got The Moon In My Pocket". The latter being featured in MY FAVOURITE SPY, not the 1951 Bob Hope film, as Paul related, but in fact from a 1942 film of the same name featuring Kay Kyser & His Orchestra and Jane Wyman. Kay Kyser being the one inveigled into espionage. Of the other Crosby numbers Rosemary Clooney landed the first with "Swinging On A Star" and Frank Sinatra took care of "Sunday, Monday Or Always" under the same circumstances as Bing, the Petrillo strike restricting him to a choral accompaniment only. "Aren't You Glad You're You" was enticed away from Bing by the Pied Pipers, not to any greater advantage I thought; whereas Jo Stafford's air-shot of "The Day After Forever" was, in my opinion, considerably superior to Bing's dreary and lack-lustre rendition. Definitely an off-colour day for The Boss. Though that may not be the opinion of other Crosby aficionados. Paul pointed up the likely disadvantage of being saddled with his given name Edward Chester Babcock before settling on the up-market 'moniker' James Van Heusen; but it's amusing to note that Chester Babcock was the name of Bob Hope's character in THE ROAD TO HONG KONG. As Bob was also called Chester in ROAD TO UTOPIA, both films featuring Jimmy's music, it would seem by his assumed acquiescence that he must have been harking back to the cruel merriment that such a name would almost certainly have aroused in his youthful contemporaries, and it might have been his way of getting back at his parents! However, he was in good company wasn't he: William Pratt - Boris Karloff; Marion Morrison - John Wayne; Ethel Gumm - Judy Garland; Archibald Leach - Cary Grant. Delve even deeper and the list is pretty extensive.

Also included as a birthday boy was Stephane Grapelli, the famed jazz violinist, - 1908 and still going strong - in a celebratory programme of great variety, and interest. The same can be said of all the Crosby recordings that have been a part of the great British public's listening pleasure these past months. With the will and determination of enthusiasts everywhere the voice of Bing can continue to sally forth from our wireless sets and be a very notable part of the good music scene for a long time to come.

**Bert Bishop**

# Keeping Track
## A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

This time around we have eight Bing CDs to review and out of these four are double albums which of course is very good to see. The MCA albums *The Best of Bing Crosby* and *Bing Crosby And The Andrews Sisters* were of course mentioned in the last issue. Benny Green complained in one of his radio shows that he had been sent seven Bing albums to review, but you will get no such complaints from me - the more the merrier. The only complaint I get is from members wanting to know where to obtain albums. All I can say is that you have to look around. UK members should try their local shops and The Record Centre, Birmingham. I am sure the same applies to our American members who can also try Tower Records. Where albums are from specialist outlets I try to give the address from where they can be purchased. If you still have difficulties please write to me with SAE or telephone me and I will see whether I can help.

**Bing Crosby And The Andrew Sisters** **MCA / Decca MCAD2-11503** **USA**

**Disc One**

Ciribiribin
Yodelin' Jive
Pistol Packin' Mama
Vict'ry Polka
Jingle Bells
Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town
Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin
Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (Ma Baby)
Don't Fence Me In
The Three Caballeros
There's A Fella Waiting In Poughkeepsie
Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive
Along The Navajo Trail

**Disc Two**

Weddin' Day
The Twelve Days Of Christmas
Here Comes Santa Claus
Quicksilver
Have I Told You Lately That I Love You
Lock Stock And Barrel
Ask Me No Questions (And I'll Tell You No Lies)
Life Is So Peculiar
High On The List
Poppa Santa Claus
Mele Kalikimaka
Black Ball Ferry Line
The Yodelling Ghost

Good Good Good (That's You -That's You)
Happy Happy Happy Wedding Day
Betsy
Get Your Kicks On Route 66
South America Take It Away
Anything You Can Do (I Can Do Better)
There's No Business Like Show Business
Go West Young Man
Tallahassee
The Freedom Train
Apalachicola FLA
You Don't Have To Know The Language
A Hundred And Sixty Acres
At The Flying W
Running Time 77:56

Forsaking All Others
Sparrow In The Tree Top
I'll Si Si Ya In Bahia
The Live Oak Tree
South Rampart Street Parade
Jingle Bells
Cool Water
Don't Fence Me In (Blow Up)
The Three Caballeros (Blow Up)
There's A Fella Waiting In Poughkeepsie (Alt/take)
Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (Blow Up)
The Freedom Train (Blow Up)
A Hundred And Sixty Acres (Parody)

Running Time 75:30

*Ken Barnes has already waxed lyrical about this set and we must join him in congratulating MCA for producing this definitive collection of Bing and the Andrews Sisters which includes all the song titles Bing recorded with the Sisters as a group. It even includes an alternate take and several fluffs. There are of course a few alternate takes missing and the collection doesn't include the three songs Bing recorded with Patty Andrews. It does however have a number of titles which have never previously been released. Out of the 54 titles no fewer than 24 are making their first appearance on compact disc. This is a marvellous CD and is a real collectors item, which you no doubt know was compiled by our US representative Wig Wiggins. The only thing that I don't like about it is the front sleeve which to me looks a bit of a hotch potch with three colours that don't go well together - the blueish strips look totally out of place and I am sure that had a bit more thought been used it could have been vastly improved. The liner notes are excellent and prove very informative. UK members wanting to get this album can order it at one of the larger record shops, but as an import it will be very costly at £31.99. (Price in USA is about $32)*

**The Best Of Bing Crosby (2CDs)** **MCA CD11561 Cassette (MCC11561)** **UK**

The track listings were as shown in BING114. By now I am sure that you know all there is to know about this album and have probably purchased it . The sleeve design in my opinion was poor as there were no sleeve notes, although a nice photo of Bing was used on the front liner. The song titles were hard to read with white print on a pale green background as were the titles on the inside of the liner. The ICC and Leslie Gaylor got a mention but you would need a magnifying glass to confirm this. The masters used for 'So Would I'; 'A Friend Of Yours' and 'Busy Doing Nothing' left a little to be desired, but apart from these this is an excellent combination of songs and the remaining sound quality is very good. The following thirteen titles make their first appearance on CD:- 'Busy Doing Nothing', 'So Would I', 'A Friend Of Yours', 'I've Never Been In Love Before', 'Among My Souvenirs', 'A Weaver Of Dreams', 'I Whistle A Happy Tune', 'Moonlight On A White Picket Fence', 'Embraceable You', 'Just One Of Those Things', 'The Things We Did Last Summer', 'Just For You' and 'Marrying For Love'. 'Gigi', 'Give Me The Simple Life' and 'Like Someone In Love' make only their second appearances. I don't know how the shop selling price is reached. I've recently seen the album on sale at £13.99, £15.99, £17.99 and £18.49 and one well known store has them in their sale at £8.99 - how can they justify all these different prices? However I have heard that MCA are fairly happy with the sales of this album.

**Bing Crosby - The Definitive Collection (2CDs)** **Music & Memories MMD 1053-1/2** **UK**

**Disc One**
Where The Blue Of The Night
It's Been A Long Long Time
Don't Fence Me In
Moonlight Becomes You
Sweet Leilani
I Can't Begin To Tell You
You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
Oh What A Beautiful Morning w Trudy Erwin
Swinging On A Star
Sierra Sue
Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby
Be Careful It's My Heart
Somebody Loves Me
What's New
Mexicali Rose
It's Easy To Remember
Red Sails In The Sunset
Too Marvellous For Words

**Disc Two**
Sunday Monday Or Always
The Moon Got In My Eyes
June In January
Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive
Brother Can You Spare A Dime
Just One More Chance
Out Of Nowhere
I'm An Old Cowhand (From The Rio Grande)
McNamara's Band
On The Atchison Topeka And The Santa Fe
Blue Hawaii
Pennies From Heaven
Small Fry
You Belong To My Heart
Easter Parade
Pistol Packin Mama
Trade Winds
Only Forever

Deep In The Heart Of Texas
Going My Way
I'll Be Seeing You
White Christmas
Running Time 65:44

San Fernando Valley
I Love You (Porter)
I'll Be Home For Christmas
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra Loo-Ral
Running Time 66:41

*This double album can only be purchased from the Good Music Record Co., Hayes House, Freepost PY2035 PO Box 99 St Austell Cornwall PL25 4BR.. There is nothing new to CD on this double album, although it is however a pleasant compilation of the 'best of Bing' type songs that are well known to us all. The album was in fact advertised in their catalogue as 'Bing Crosby's Greatest Hits' and it was somewhat of a surprise when it turned up with the title 'Bing Crosby The Definitive Collection'. The quality is good and I would have no hesitation in recommending it as a very enjoyable album. It is however very expensive at £18.95 and has a drab sleeve and liners printed only in black and white. In the Good Music Record Co. catalogue they offer a money back guarantee if you are not completely satisfied.*

**Harry Lillis - Love And A Little Covered Wagon** **Ltd Collectors Edition HLYCD004/5** **Unknown**

**Disc One**
Dance With A Dolly
Love Makes The World Go Round
Crossing The Plains
Friendly Persuasion
How Come You Do Me Like You Do
Shenandoah
I've Heard That Song Before
Rock A Bye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody
Will You Come To The Bower
Coquette
One For My Baby
Jennie Jenkins
Lonesome And Sorry
I'll Take Romance
The Streets Of Laredo
When My Sugar Walks Down The Street
The Song Is Ended
Hang Me Oh Hang Me
Marie
In The Chapel In The Moonlight
Bound For The Promised Land
Sentimental Gentleman From Georgia
Thank You For A Lovely Evening
Git Along Little Doggies
There's Danger In Your Eyes Cherie
South Of The Border

**Disc Two**
Ballin' The Jack
What'll I Do
Buffalo Gals
Stormy Weather
Remember
When I Went Off To Prospect
My Prayer
Say Si Si
Red River Valley
River Stay Away From My Door
That Old Gang Of Mine
900 Miles
The Breeze And I
I Hear Music
Skip To My Lou
Tenderly
Ole Buttermilk Sky
Green Grow The Lilacs
Isn't This A Lovely Day To Be Caught In The Rain
All Alone
Old Settler's Song
Say It Isn't So
Amapola
Buckskin Joe
Always
Puttin' On The Ritz

*This is another in the Harry Lillis series of private limited collectors edition albums. The strange title relates to the album contents. Let's not detract from the fact that this Harry Lillis chap can sing a bit and who could fail to enjoy the likes of 'Friendly Persuasion', 'I'll Take Romance', 'The Chapel In The Moonlight', 'All Alone', 'Tenderly' and 'Dance With A Dolly' together with many more lovely songs that make their debuts on this thoroughly enjoyable double album. We get a Western flavour with 'Shenandoah', 'Crossing The Plains', 'The Streets Of Laredo', 'Old Settler's Song' and 'Buckskin Joe' and overall we have a marvellous collection of songs. I can't fully review this here as I have not yet heard it, but I am advised that the quality is very good. How often do we get a new release where virtually all the 52 titles are new to CD? The release date is scheduled for the end of March and European members can write to me to obtain copies of this non-profit making album. I am told that not too many copies are available so orders will be dealt with strictly on a first come first served basis. Cheques can be made payable to me. Price UK Mainland £15.50 +pp (£1.00), Rest of Europe £15.50 +pp (£1.50). USA Members should write to Wig Wiggins.*

**Harry Lillis On Stage** **Ltd Collectors Edition** **HLYCD004**

A number of members have asked me if could get them copies of this album. I have been able to locate a few copies so I am able to assist if they send a cheque in my name for £12.00 including pp.

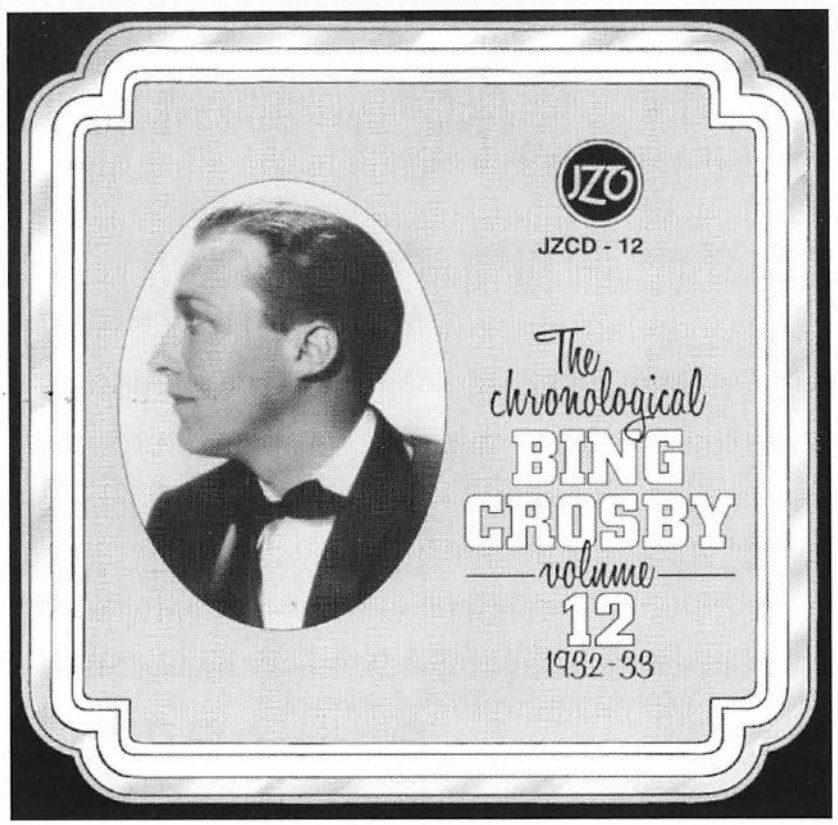
**The Chronological Bing Crosby** **Jonzo Records JZCD 12** **UK**

Just An Echo In The Valley
Some Day We'll Meet Again
Street Of Dreams (B12706-A)
You're Beautiful Tonight My Dear (B12889-B)
I've Got The World On A String (B12991-A)
I've Got The World On A String (B12991-B)

Street Of Dreams (B12706-B)
It's Within Your Power
I'm Playing With Fire
Try A Little Tenderness (B12857-A)
Try A Little Tenderness (B12857-B)
You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me (B12887-A)
You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me (B12887-B)
Young And Healthy (B12888-A)
Young And Healthy (B12888-B)
You're Beautiful Tonight My Dear (B12889-A)
My Honey's Lovin' Arms (B12992-A)
My Honey's Lovin' Arms (B12992-B)
What Do I Care It's Home (B13043-A)
What Do I Care It's Home (B13043-B)
You've Got Me Crying Again
Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn
Stay On The Right Side Of The Road (B13150-A)
Stay On The Right Side Of The Road (B13150-B)
Here Is My Heart
Running Time 77:25

*I am very pleased to see that JZCD-11 sold sufficiently well to enable the series to continue. This issue covers the period from the 4th November 1932 until the 14th March 1933. The B takes of 'Street Of Dreams' and 'Try A Little Tenderness' make their first appearance on CD and 'Someday We'll Meet Again', 'It's Within Your Power' and 'What Do I Care It's Home' make only their second appearances. I like this CD and the overall quality is good although there is some background noise which I suppose is to be expected bearing in mind the age of the material in question. It is unfortunate that CDs have conditioned us not to expect any surface noise or hiss, particularly when we remember the 'frying tonight' days of the 78s. The sleeve follows the same excellent format as the last issue and the notes are just as informative, which is good to see when many companies include very little information. The album is only available in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7DL. The price remains at £10.60 including pp (or two for £21). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (address inside front cover).*

*Note: The next album in the series, JZCD-13, is planned to be released before the end of summer with possibly more albums being issued by the end of the year.*




**Bing Crosby At His Best** **Pickwick 1128-2** **USA**

Talk To The Animals
Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead
Chim Chim Cheree
I Call You Sunshine
High Hopes
Thoroughly Modern Millie
My Friend The Doctor
Up Up And Away
Puff The Magic Dragon
What's More American

With the exception of 'I Call You Sunshine' which makes its first appearance on CD, all other tracks appeared on the 1991 Album 'A Visit to The Movies' Laserlight 15411. The quality is very good on this budget priced CD but with only the one track new to compact disc I can't see it selling very well unless of course you missed the earlier version. Price: $6.99

**My Favorite Country Songs** **MCA Special Products 7675-20982-2** **USA**

I'm An Old Cowhand
Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle
Twilight On The Trail
Tumbling Tumbleweeds
Clementine
Empty Saddles
We'll Rest At The End Of The Trail
Cool Water w The Andrews Sisters
Along The Navajo Trail w The Andrews Sisters
Home On The Range

*Nothing new to CD here although 'Cool Water' makes only its second appearance. Again as you would expect the quality is good on yet another budget priced CD. It is nice to see MCA releasing so much Bing material in recent times. Let's hope that they come up with something special to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Bing's passing. Price: $6.99*

**Bing Crosby/Rosemary Clooney & Friends** **Master Tone 1024** **USA**

White Christmas (BC)
The Christmas Song (BC)
Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas (RC)
Silent Night (BC)
It Came Upon A Midnight Clear (RC)
O Little Town Of Bethlehem (BC)
Jingle Bells (RC)
Adeste Fideles (BC)
The Christmas Song (RC)
Count Your Blessings (RC)
Good King Wenceslas (BC)
Hark The Herald Angels Sing (BC)
Silent Night (RC)
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (BC)
Let It Snow Let It Snow Let It Snow (BC)
Joy To The World (BC)
The First Noel (BC)
Away in A Manger (BC)
Deck The Halls (BC)
Silver Bells (with Carol Richards)
The Snowman (RC)
That Christmas Feeling (BC with Gary Crosby)
Go Tell It On The Mountain (Swan Silvertones)
Children Go Where I Send Thee (Gospel Starlets)
Count Your Blessings (Bishop Gaines)

*Overall I was disappointed, with what could have been a very nice Christmas album being spoilt by the mixed sound quality. The tracks are from various sources and some aren't too bad but several of the songs sung by Rosemary Clooney run very much on the slow side, while other tracks have too many clicks for my liking. I did however like Bing's version of 'The Christmas Song' (from the Philco radio show of 25th December 1946). I also enjoyed Rosemary Clooney's rendering of 'Jingle Bells'. I suppose if one takes the price into account, it's not bad value for money. Price: $2.99 Running Time 60:58*

**Guest Appearances:**

**The Golden Age Of Swing Volumes 3&4 (2CDs)** **Haratio Nelson Records HNCD6002** **UK**
40 Tracks (1Bing) When My Dreamboat Comes Home

**Hits Of '32** **ASV Living Era CDAJA5182** **UK**
24 Tracks (2 Bing) Please and Paradise

**The Harmonious Hits Of The Merry Macs** **Collectors' Choice Music CCM025-2 MSD-36072 USA**
14 Tracks (1 Bing) Dolores w The Merry Macs

**The Society Of Singers Presents An All-Star Christmas** **Sony Music AK 67881** **USA**
17 Tracks (1 Bing) White Christmas. The other stars include: Tony Bennett, Peggy Lee, Perry Como, Rosemary Clooney, Frank Sinatra, Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme, Nat King Cole, Andy Williams, Johnny Mathis, Mel Torme, Ella Fitzgerald, Doris Day, Dean Martin and Patti Page.

**When You Dream About Hawaii** **MCA/Sound Exchange MSD-36014** **USA**
23 Tracks (4 Bing) When You Dream About Hawaii, Sweet Leilani, Bali Ha'i and Mele Kalikimaka with The Andrews Sisters

**Andrews Sisters Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy(2CDs)** **MCA/Sound Exchange MSD2-35984** **USA**
40 Tracks (3 Bing) Yodelin' Jive, Ciribiribin and The Three Caballeros

**The Mel Torme Collection (4CDs)** **Rhino Records R2 71589** **USA**
There is only one Bing song on this four CD set:-Day By Day

**Jerome Kern - A Fine Romance (Part of 3CD Set)** **Start Records Parade PAR2019** **UK**
20 Tracks (2 Bing) Can I Forget You and The Folks Who Live On The Hill -
The other 2CDs **-The Songs Of Irving Berlin -Lets Face The Music And Dance PAR2020 and A Trip To The Moon On Gossamer Wing - Cole Porter PAR2041** have no Bing content

**Great Crooners** **Sony Music Special Products A26545** **USA**
**The Life, Times & Music Series** not to be confused with Time Life
*12 Tracks (1 Bing) Learn To Croon. This CD comes complete with a well produced 64 page book (size: 5.625" x 10.875") written by Delilah Jones entitled 'Great Crooners'. There are 6 pages in the book devoted to Bing which are not as accurate as one would have liked. It also has four photos of Bing and he also appears on the front cover along with Frank Sinatra and Perry Como. The CD is somewhat of a collectors item with other stars: Nick Lucas, Gene Austin, Rudy Vallee, Russ Columbo, Dick Powell, Ozzie Nelson, Fred Astaire, Buddy Clark, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como and Jack Leonard. The overall quality is pretty good although there is some surface noise on a couple of tracks. I found that the more I played this CD the more I enjoyed it. This is just one of a*

*series of such CDs/books. I understand that there is a UK agent from whom these can be obtained, although I don't yet have the details. By the time you read these reviews I should have the information and anyone wanting a copy can contact me for details.*

**Jazz Greats No 19** **Jazz Voices -The Men** **UK**

*As mentioned elsewhere in BING, this is a fortnightly magazine issued with a CD or cassette with 22 tracks (2 Bing) 'My Honey's Lovin' Arms' and 'Tain't So Honey Tain't So'. Other artists appearing include: The Mills Bros. Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Billy Eckstine, Johnny Mercer and Phil Harris. Issue 19 has a photograph of Bing on the front cover of the magazine and on the CD sleeve liner and the magazine has a nice write up on Bing. At the time of going to press BACK ISSUES could be ordered by phoning 01424 756565 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm). Credit card orders are accepted or write to Jazz Greats Back Issues, Marshall Cavendish, PO Box 1, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 4TJ Price £3.99 (prices UK only).*

**Bands Of The '20s** **Intersound 3555** **USA**

15 Tracks (1 Bing) Side By Side with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and The Rhythm Boys

*This disc will play on a normal stereo system or on a computer and is the second combined CD and CD ROM disc that I've heard of to have Bing material. I haven't seen the disc so cannot at this stage comment on the quality or give you any more details.*

**Peggy Lee Listen To The Magic** **President Records PLCD550** **UK**

*28 Tracks Although Bing doesn't actually sing on this particular CD, he does introduce a number of songs(five in total) which come from Bing's Philco Shows circa 1946/48 with the John Scott Trotter Orchestra in attendance. Anyone liking Peggy Lee will find her in fine voice singing a great selection of songs from radio days. The quality of the album is very good. Price £9.99*

FROM MY CRYSTAL BALL I understand from Ken Barnes that EMI are to issue the 1976 Palladium Show in June. This will be on the EMI Gold label and sell for about £5.99. Running time: 78 minutes. It will include Ted Rogers and Rosemary Clooney although the family segment is not expected to appear on this CD. EMI plan also to issue a 3CD box set with all the outstanding United Artists tracks which is scheduled for release in September / October. Basically the three CDs will be as follows: 1. - That's What Life Is All About 2. - The Pleasure of Your Company (the duets) with Johnny Mercer and Fred Astaire plus two duets of Bing and Bob Hope together with some of the family duets from the Palladium Show 3. - Come Share The Wine. At this stage the selling price is expected to be around £15. CONGRATULATIONS KEN - this gives us a great deal to look forward to and will keep the Crosby flag flying high in this the 20th. anniversary of his passing.

Also, I have learnt of another tremendous new 20th Anniversary double album planned for later this year and the majority of the 50 proposed titles are new to CD. To whet your appetites I'll list just a few of the tracks:- 'Robins And Roses', 'What Will I Tell My Heart', 'When The Organ Played O Promise Me', 'Let's Waltz For Old Times' Sake', 'Nell And I', 'When The White Azaleas Start Blooming', 'Conchita Marquita Lopez', 'All Of My Life', 'We'll Gather Lilacs' and 'Old Black Joe'. The period covered is from 1936 to 1946. The record company involved usually produces good quality material so all things being equal we should have yet another fine Bing album if this CD comes to fruition.

**VIDEO WARNING!! Road To Bali - Film** **Orbit Media Ltd ORB 0021** **UK**

I know it is not my normal task to report on new video releases but I felt that I ought to make an exception in this case as the quality of this VHS video cassette is rather poor to say the least. It is on sale in large stores at £10.99 and it is not worth purchasing. Copies recorded when the film was on TV will definitely be infinitely better so don't waste your money purchasing it unless you want to buy the case and liner to use with your copy.

Well that is all for this issue. If you hear of anything that I have missed please let me know and I'll try to include details next time around. I do appreciate the help that members give and if I don't always get around to thanking people personally please accept my apologies - the memory is not what it used to be. Also my thanks to everyone who wrote to pass on kind comments about my book 'The Songs of Bing Crosby on Compact Disc!' Until next time I wish you good listening.

**Jim Reilly**

# From Big Bands to TV

## John Scott Trotter's 50-year career

**We all know that the name of John Scott Trotter is synonymous with that of Bing but how much do we really know about JST himself? Stan White in a letter used earlier in the magazine infers that JST retired in 1954 but did he? Mervyn Thomas has kindly made available an article about John Scott which dates from 1975 and we have great pleasure in reproducing it with grateful thanks to the original author.**

Of all the famous Delta Sig leaders of the big bands of the thirties - Ted Weems, Hal Kemp, Jan Garber, John Scott Trotter, Skinnay Ennis - only one, John Scott Trotter, Alpha Delta '26, is still an active musician today.

Although he looks upon himself as semi-retired, no one with as many projects, commitments and interests has a right to use the term. At 66, he still has the youthful enthusiasm for his work characteristic of much younger men. This, despite the fact that his 50-year professional record as musician, music director, arranger and composer has already included three or four outstanding careers. He is, in fact, so busy that he seldom makes the 60-mile drive to his home in Laguna Hills, California, spending most of his time in his Hollywood studio apartment, where his piano is one of the most conspicuous pieces of furniture in his living room. The apartment, he laughingly says, has "a lived-in look," but it is dominated by an elegantly-carved mantel, and it contains such unusual items as a 400 B. C. Grecian vase and a breakfront full of antique Chinese export porcelain in the willow-ware pattern, perhaps the most complete collection in Los Angeles.

One day in late February, he took an hour or so from his busy schedule (though he was preparing for a run-through the following day of a score for a projected movie) to recall some of the events which led to his long association with Bing Crosby, George Gobel, and the Peanuts television specials.

Thinner now than twenty years ago when his hefty contrast to diminutive George Gobel was a standard source of gags on the Gobel show, he has switched to black horn-rimmed glasses which give him a somewhat scholarly appearance.

There is, however, nothing withdrawn about his manner; he is affable and gracious in a way which bespeaks his Southern heritage. He is also obviously an educated man, and no one would guess without being told that his formal career at the University of North Carolina lasted little more than one semester.

Trotter was only sixteen in 1926 when he left the Charlotte, N.C., high school where he had been student body president to enter the university at Chapel Hill. There he ran into Hal Kemp, whom he had known in high school and who had joined Alpha Delta Chapter in 1923. Kemp had formed an earlier band on campus, the "Carolina Club," had gone to Europe, and had come back to New York and joined the Paul Specht orchestra for a time. Now, returning to the university, Kemp had thrown away his saxophone and was never going to pick it up again. This resolution lasted two weeks into the fall semester, and Trotter found himself in the new Hal Kemp orchestra, along with another Delta Sig pledge, Skinnay Ennis, who somehow was never initiated. John already knew Skinnay, because Skinnay came from Salisbury, N.C., where John's grandparents lived, and he had played with him in a summer resort orchestra at Crystal Lake. Among the other early Hal Kemp orchestra members were Harry Pond from New Orleans, who played the long-necked banjo, and Dick Mackie, a trumpet player who played great New Orleans jazz, sometimes with his horn in a galvanised bucket.

The growing reputation of the band led to an Easter vacation engagement at the Metropolitan Theatre in Atlanta, but a conflict arose, since the engagement overlapped the reopening of school by a couple of days.

"We asked the Dean for permission to be late returning to school, and since the academic standing of the band wasn't that great, the Dean said, 'You'd better be back when you are supposed to, or don't come back at all,'" Trotter recalled. "We decided the engagement was more important, so we all dropped out, Hal in the middle of his junior year and the rest of us as freshmen."

Though no longer in school, Trotter continued to live in the Delta Sig house while the band got its start. Through the recreation manager of a summer resort at Hendersonville they met Fred Waring, who arranged for the orchestra to play in Toronto and at Shay's Hippodrome, a theater in Buffalo.

"We were not very theatrically oriented, and we just sat there and played," said Trotter. "We did have one flashy little thing: we had Christmas tree lights in the saxophones, and Hal had a pedal which he could operate in tempo so that the lights would flash on and off, and that was practically our act, except doing a little singing in unison.

"The manager came back stage at the theatre in Buffalo and said, 'Can't somebody introduce the numbers?' So, between shows, Hal and Saxie Dowell got together and decided the introductions should be humorous. On the next show Hal got up - he was rather gawky at that time - and said, 'Our next number will be, "I'm going to eat beets until I blush." 'Absolutely NOTHING from the audience, so he sat down, and we played whatever the next tune was, and the manager came back and said, 'Just play!'"

Before long the band got a job at the Strand Roof over the Strand Theater at 47th and Broadway in New York, and

its success there led to a series of one-nighters on the road. "Sometimes you'd go to the next town the same night after a job, and you wouldn't get to the hotel until nearly the next morning, but at least you'd wake up where you were going to play. Of course, we were young, and it was really a great experience."

In 1929 or 1930 Trotter began to make arrangements for the band; his first was Muddy Waters. After the band went to England in 1930, he arranged a number of English tunes: Heart of Stone, Dinner for One, Please James, and Got a Date with an Angel (which later became Skinnay Ennis' theme song when he had his own band.)

As he looks back on it now, "with 20-20 hindsight," Trotter sometimes wishes he had written more songs of his own in the Kemp days, rather than arranging the tunes of others. "I really should have been composing then - I'd have had my choice of good lyric writers because we had good radio time, and the band was a good plug." Nevertheless, the Trotter arrangements helped develop the distinctive Kemp style, and Got a Date With an Angel was one of the catalysts which led to the orchestra's status as a big name band; it was included in the first group of recordings to be nominated for the Record Hall of Fame of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

One Trotter contribution was the singing introduction; in 'Got a Date', it was "Climbing up the ladder of love to find the one who waits for me," a phrase from a different song, probably from Earl Carroll's 'Vanities'. The singing introduction was picked up by others, notably by Kay Kyser, who had been a Sigma Nu at North Carolina when Trotter was there ("I always say Kay was the only cheer leader who made good,") Another feature of the 'Got a Date' arrangement, the ending in a staccato inverted pyramid of instruments, influenced the style of other bands, especially Richard Himber's.

In 1936 Trotter went to California on vacation, and a friend, Johnny Burke, asked him if he'd like to do the arrangements for a new Bing Crosby movie, 'Pennies From Heaven'. Trotter declined, since he was on vacation, but he later agreed to help composer Arthur Johnston with a couple of piano scores, and he "fell in love with the tunes." He soon found himself orchestrating the title song and four others. A year later, when he was back in New York working for the American Record Company, he got a telegram asking if he could come back to Hollywood to take over the music on Bing Crosby's Kraft Music Hall radio program, since Jimmy Dorsey wanted to get back East to cash in on his band's exposure on the show. Within a week, Trotter arrived on the Coast to begin an association with Crosby which lasted professionally for 17 years and continues today as a warm personal friendship.

*Bing helps John Scott celebrate his birthday.*

John recalls now that his first meeting with Bing had occurred some years earlier when Crosby was singing with Paul Whiteman. One night about 3 a.m., when the Kemp band was rehearsing new material after an evening performance, Hoagy Carmichael chose a novel way to plug a new song with the band. Running into the hall, he took a dive onto the dance floor and slid all the way across it holding up a musical manuscript. It was 'Stardust'. The friend with him cheering him on was Bing. As Crosby's musical director, Trotter worked on the Kraft, Philco, Chesterfield and General Electric shows. One of the several hundred records Bing made with a Trotter accompaniment was 'White Christmas', one of the first five recordings elected to the Record Hall of Fame. It sold more than 25 million copies and is the all time best-selling single.

In 1954, when the Crosby series came to an end, Trotter moved to the George Gobel TV show on NBC, becoming musical director and "Uncle John" in the Gobel routines for the rest of the 50s. Since the Gobel years, John has done free-lancing on various specials, and most recently he has worked during the last few years on the Peanuts specials such as "The Great Pumpkin," He's Your Dog, Charlie Brown," and "You're Not Elected, Charlie Brown." The next one on the schedule is set for October.

These days, he spends more time composing; currently he has just completed a score for a proposed Disney film with lyricist Tom Adair. In this collaboration, Trotter and Adair almost never work together directly; John prefers to set the Adair lyrics to music. "Good lyrics inspire me, and sometimes Tom will come up with a verse form that I would never think of if I were writing the tune first," he said.

He worked with Adair on the musical numbers for two television productions, "Babar, The Little Elephant" and "Babar Comes to America." The musical score for the first of these was nominated for an Emmy by the Television Academy. The music for the feature-length "A Boy Named Charlie Brown" brought both an Oscar and a Grammy nomination. "The academics say that being

nominated for these awards is as good as winning one, but nobody believes that," he laughed. "Still, it's very nice."

Trotter is a natural musician, but his composing is not self-taught; he studied with famed classical composer Ernst Toch, who himself has written extensively for the motion picture field. "The great thing he taught me was to have no inhibitions in song writing; I don't follow the conventional aaba form."

Another Trotter interest which almost reached the vocational level is antiques. He comes by the interest honestly, since his Quaker ancestors go back to the early 1700s in Nansemond County, Virginia. John began collecting 18th century English and American antiques, and eventually he opened a shop in Laguna with his sister and her husband. At one time in the 50s he was even president of the Antique Dealers Association of Southern California. He is working on a book on antique collecting which he hopes to finish if he ever has the time. "All the research has been done, but getting it all together is something else; maybe I'll get around to it in time."

One thing he has made some time for recently is Guide Dogs for the Blind, a Northern California organisation with headquarters in San Rafael. Trotter belongs to the rustic but fashionable Bohemian Grove on the Russian River somewhat north of that city, and a friend had driven him down from the Grove on a couple of occasions to see the dogs and their blind masters learning to work together. When the organisation started a Southern California branch, Trotter agreed to serve on its board. Though he has generally shunned the charity organisation role, he has been active on the board of the Descanso Gardens Guild, an auxiliary which aids the Los Angeles County gardens of camellias, azaleas, and rhododendrons in La Canada. He has also served on the board of the Orange County Philharmonic Society for a number of years and has been a national trustee of the Television Academy. He is a past president of the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Another activity with which he has been closely connected is the yearly Songfest of the University of Southern California. In the 22 years that it has been presented by student groups of the university, he has been a judge or guest conductor on about 20 occasions. At times he has been a supper guest at the Delta Sig house at USC in connection with his Songfest appearances.

Trotter has also had some contact with another Los Angeles university, UCLA, to which he has contributed a number of items for the Ernst Toch archives, including some of Toch's music scores which had been unobtainable. John's own papers, however, are being donated to the University of Wyoming, which is making a collection of materials from the popular entertainment business of the 20th Century. This year he has already sent 60 boxes of musical scores, transcripts, and other items. The university also has archival materials from Hal Kemp, Bing Crosby, and George Gobel.

Trotter enjoys his semi-retirement, which has enough commitment to keep him busy, but at a somewhat less hectic pace than in the days of the one-night stands. "I couldn't take that now - in fact, I couldn't take it 30 years ago," he laughed.

He tries to get to Europe twice a year and usually manages it, driving through the countryside and paying particular attention to the architecture. It was to become an architect that he entered the University of North Carolina in 1926. In the light of the musical enjoyment that he has provided everyone in the forty-eight years since Easter vacation of 1927, it's probably a good thing the Dean wouldn't let him back into school.

**Chandler Harris**

*(Editor: John Scott Trotter died on October 29, 1975 aged 67. Mervyn Thomas, who provided the article and the photograph of the birthday cake, is still in contact with John Scott's sister, Margaret Kinghorn, who lives next door to Mervyn's cousin in Laguna Hills, California.)*

# What The Papers Say

**Space precludes us from reproducing all of the cuttings from the newspapers sent to us in recent months and just a few are shown as examples. Our thanks to the contributors. Needless to say, we have written to Fred Tetlow.**

THE EXPRESS: MONDAY FEBRUARY 17 1997

**BETTER DAYS . . . An uplifting story of a life-changing moment**

## Finding a love forever true . . .

How Bing Crosby's records inspired a young airman

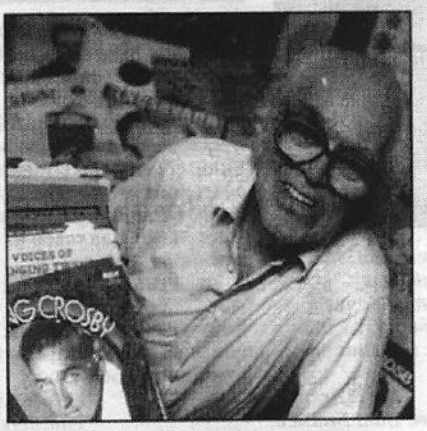
**ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON** in Malta in 1943, a 22-year-old RAF pilot named Frederick Tetlow wandered into his local club and discovered a room where the only objects of note were a gramophone and a pile of 78s. He played one of the records, a Bing Crosby number, then played it again. He was hooked. "I vowed," says Fred, now 75, "to buy every Bing Crosby record I could get my hands on."

Before that day, Fred describes himself as "a fairly naive young man just wandering through life". But even he can't say for sure why Bing was the one to rouse him. "Perhaps," he says, "it was the relief of the bombing being over. Malta had undergone some of the heaviest bombing.

"We had been on a starvation diet and I'd fully expected to die. Suddenly hearing Bing Crosby's voice, that deep baritone — it just got to me — it felt as if he was singing to me alone."

Since then Fred, who lives in Southampton, has delighted in tracking down the numerous Crosby recordings in existence, many of them containing precious variations or mistakes.

This often involved him in correspondence with collectors on the other side of the world. It has also meant lots of rummaging around in junk shops. Fred smacks his lips:



**A GRAND OBSESSION: Fred Tetlow**

"When another collector comes to visit and asks where you got that rarity and you reply nonchalantly 'I junked it,' his look of envy is a delight to behold."

Fred now has one of the world's biggest collections of Bing Crosby's work, but somehow he has managed to fit in a normal life too. Married with two children, he worked as lorry driver until his retirement.

So how have the two worlds mixed? Fred laughs wryly. "My older brother thinks it's all a load of rubbish and although my wife liked Bing at first, very early in the marriage her interest faded away — she got fed up, really." Some might feel there's an element of sadness to Fred's grand obsession. But, as he is the first to say: "When rock 'n' roll came along, Crosby's music was left behind and it will never be revived."

Fred is adamant that he is not going to leave his collection to anyone because "no one will want it". He says most of Bing's original fans have now died and "there's no one to correspond with and even the (fan) magazine has gone". But Fred doesn't care. His life was changed by Crosby and nothing can alter that. "I play his records every day and I still get a thrill."

He takes a big breath: "And there's something else. If you listen to Paul Robeson singing Ballad For Americans, you'll notice that on that last, long, drawn-out note he stops half-way through and takes a breath. "Well Bing sang that song and he goes straight through," Fred sighs contentedly. "Yet Bing was the untrained singer. What do you think of that?"

**CHARLOTTE O'SULLIVAN**

*Was there a moment when your life, or the life of someone close to you, changed for the better? Write to: Charlotte O'Sullivan, The Last Word, The Express, Ludgate House, 245 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 9UX.*

■ I'VE been a reader since the 1920s and one of your columnists made my dream come true. Knowing I wanted to meet Bing Crosby, he sent me a telegram telling me to call Bing at the Savoy Hotel.

Bing invited me to see him the next day and what a moment for me!

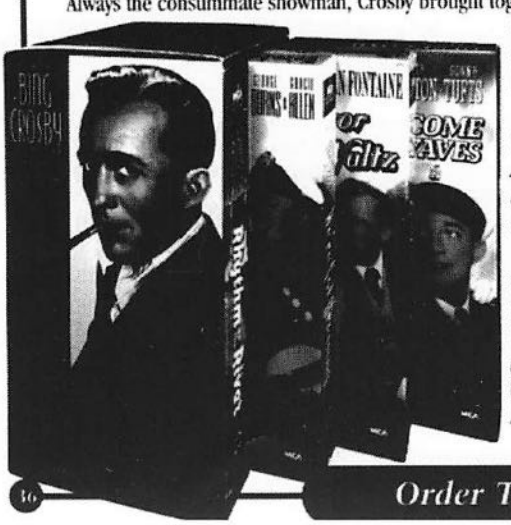
**L. GAYFORD, Newport**

(This must have been Les Gaylor)


### The Bing Crosby Collection

Ever charming, ever dapper and always the crooner, Bing Crosby filled the screen with laughter, music and romance in films that have delighted audiences for generations.

Always the consummate showman, Crosby brought together a host of Hollywood's favorite talents, including Carole Lombard, Ethel Merman, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Mary Martin, Basil Rathbone and Joan Fontaine.




In these classic musicals, you'll hear Crosby's renowned renditions of *Accentuate the Positive, May I?, Once in a Blue Moon, Only Forever, That's For Me* and many more.

This big-hit four film collection includes: *We're Not Dressing, Rhythm on The River, The Emperor Waltz* and *Here Comes the Waves*. Essential for Crosby fans of any age!

6 hours 13 minutes on four videocassettes, black & white CC

**A4522 BING CROSBY $49.98**

*Order Toll Free Anytime*

BING CROSBY, STARRING IN "TOP O' THE MORNING," A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

# *The Stetson is part of the man*

**Bing Crosby** never goes out without his Stetson...says he just doesn't feel well dressed. He knows, too, that famous Stetson quality is—and has been as long as he can remember—first in hats. Isn't the *Whippet* in *Sycamore* a knockout on Bing? See what it can do for you!

## *The Whippet by* STETSON *in Sycamore $10*

*More people wear Stetson Hats than any other brand. Stetson Hats for men and women are made only by John B. Stetson Company and its subsidiary companies in the United States and Canada.*

Designed & Printed by City Printers (Chester-le-Street) Ltd., Co. Durham DH3 3NJ Tel: 0191 3883255